

Volume XVII.]

March, 1841.

[Number 10.



THE
RELIGIOUS MONITOR,

AND

EVANGELICAL REPOSITORY:

DEVOTED TO THE PRINCIPLES OF THE REFORMATION, AS SET FORTH IN
THE FORMULARIES OF THE WESTMINSTER DIVINES, AND
WITNESSED FOR BY THE

ASSOCIATE SYNOD OF NORTH AMERICA.

EDITED BY C. WEBSTER,
Pastor of the First Associate Congregation, Philadelphia.

VOLUME XVII.

Thus saith the Lord, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good
way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls.—Jer. vi. 16.

PHILADELPHIA:
PRINTED BY WILLIAM S. YOUNG,
173, RACE STREET.
1840-41.

POSTAGE: Two sheets, 100 miles, 3 cents; any greater distance, 5 cents.



R

J

T

Josh
in tr
tion
when
Isra
judg
toget
pres
him,
migh
mon
view
to gi
his s
adm
the
hova
ump
care
their
Jehc
all t
hath
sam
Jehc
ques
care
wou
ther
their
mie
war
had
whi
not
"N
tru

THE
RELIGIOUS MONITOR,
AND
EVANGELICAL REPOSITORY.

MARCH, 1841.

ART. I.—*Family Worship.* (No. I.)

Joshua xxiv. 15: "But as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord."

THE circumstances under which these words were spoken by Joshua, are worthy of notice. Having conducted the tribes of Israel in triumph to the promised land, and distributed to each tribe its portion of the inheritance, we are told in the preceding chapter, that when he "*waxed old and was stricken in age,*" he "*called for all Israel, and for their elders, and for their heads, and for their judges, and for their officers.*" And what was his object in calling together this vast assembly? Was it that he might recount in their presence the glorious achievements that had been performed by him, and receive from them acclamations of applause? Was it that he might instruct them merely in the civil affairs of their infant commonwealth? No; this good man had a higher, and holier object in view. It was to recount to them the wonderful works of God, and to give them a farewell exhortation to devote themselves wholly to his service. Who can read this, and the preceding chapter, without admiring the fervent, yet unostentatious piety of this aged servant of the Lord? How urgently does he press upon them the claims of Jehovah to their love and service; and when narrating the glorious triumphs that had attended their march into the land of promise, how careful is he to withhold himself from their minds as the object of their gratitude, and to ascribe the glory of their victories wholly to Jehovah! "Ye have seen all that the Lord your God hath done unto all these nations because of you: for the Lord your God is He that hath fought for you." This idea he repeats again and again in the same chapter, and in this chapter he addresses them in the name of Jehovah, as though he himself had had no instrumentality in the conquest of their enemies: and it may be observed that he is equally careful to withhold from them the praise of their victories. He would no more flatter their pride, than he would exalt himself; and, therefore, he declares to them in the 12th verse, that it was "not with their sword, nor with their bow," that they had overcome their enemies. Having taken a review of the wonderful dealings of God towards them, and referred them to the rich inheritance which God had given them,—to the land for which they laboured not,—cities which they built not—vineyards and oliveyards which they planted not,—he solemnly enjoins upon them the duty of serving the Lord. "Now, therefore, fear the Lord, and serve him in sincerity and in truth, and put away the gods which your fathers served on the other

Vol. XVII.—37

side of the flood, and in Egypt; and serve ye the Lord." After this injunction upon all to serve the Lord, fearing that there might be some before him whose hearts were averse to this service, he solemnly appeals to them, if any such there were (as, alas! there were no doubt many) to choose, that day, between the service of the true God and the service of false gods.—"And if it seem evil unto you to serve the Lord, choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served, that were on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell." He proposes to them the service of the great God, who had led them with his own arm from the land of bondage,—who had fought for them,—overcome all their enemies,—and blessed them abundantly, and the service of those gods which could not hear, nor see, nor save;—and calls upon them to make a final choice. But he assures them that, whatever their choice might be, his choice was already made. "As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord." Here you will observe that Joshua not only declares that he himself would serve the Lord, but also that his house should serve him; that is his household, his wife, children, and servants. Now we cannot suppose that Joshua had any power over the hearts of the members of his household. It is the province of Almighty God alone to change the heart. What then does he mean when he declares that his house should serve him? He could mean nothing else, but that they should keep up the formal and outward worship of God. Although he had not power over their hearts so that he could cause them to render to God a *spiritual* service, yet he had, as the absolute governor of his family, authority and power to enforce the *outward act* of worship; and this authority and power he here resolves to exercise, knowing that it was the means which God had appointed, and in the use of which he could look to him for his blessing.

Brethren, you have on a late occasion made a solemn, and, I trust, a deliberate and sincere choice whom you would serve. This decision has been in favour of the living and true God. With some of you this choice was made publicly for the first time, with others it was the renewal of a choice previously made. In accordance with this choice, I called your attention, formerly, to the duty of walking with that God whom you have chosen as your God. But need I remind you that the obligations which you came under, bound you, not only to serve him yourselves, but also with your house. Surely you have not made this choice as you should have done, unless each of you has said with Joshua, "As for me and *my house*, we will serve the Lord."

The subject, then, to which we propose to call your attention, is that of family religion and family worship. It is a subject in which we feel a deep interest being fully persuaded that we can never have a true revival of religion in the church until Christians are brought to the practice of family religion and family worship. The grounds which we have for this persuasion, you will discover in the course of our remarks. These remarks have been principally suggested by a treatise on this subject by the learned and pious John Howe:—a treatise from which we have not been ashamed to borrow freely, as it is not our object to present what is new, but what may be profitable.

In the farther prosecution of this subject we shall,

I. Make a few preparatory remarks, and

1st. *We observe, that the obligation of worshipping God in the*

family presupposes an obligation to worship him in secret. This, we presume, will not be denied. The relation which we sustain to God as *creatures* is the foundation of all other relations, and the formation of other relations can never take away this original and fundamental relation;—and, consequently, the obligations that arise from this relation cannot cease to exist by the addition of other obligations;—for while the relation that gives rise to these obligations remains, the obligations themselves must remain. As every member of the human family is a distinct creature, and as he retains his individuality throughout all the various relations of life, so must he carry with him those obligations which are binding upon him as an individual creature. Thus, in these words of Joshua, there is a recognition of this original obligation. He does not say, As for my house they shall serve the Lord, but, “As for *me* and my house, we will serve the Lord.” He would serve the Lord as an individual, and in addition to this he would see that his house should serve him. You are not to infer that the service which you render to God in a family capacity, releases you from your obligation to serve him in an individual capacity. And we wish you to bear in mind that it is to such as worship God individually, that we shall address ourselves on the subject of family religion. To prayerless persons we have nothing to say on the present occasion, but to repeat the words of our Lord, “Enter into thy closet; and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father who is in secret; and thy Father who seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly.”

2nd. *We include in the term family, all the members of the same household, whether transient or permanent.* It is true that the natural relation existing between the members of the same family, lays a foundation of obligation for family worship, yet it will by no means follow from this, that there is no obligation resting upon those who may not be natural members of the family; for there are many other considerations, besides that of relationship, that bind us to the duty of family worship. And these considerations, in so far as they are applicable to persons dwelling together in the same house, impose upon them the same obligations. Now, there may, perhaps, be some present, who are living in families of which they are not naturally members. Such persons, we would remark, are included in the word *family* as used by us. And we shall consider such persons to be under the same obligations to engage in the worship of God, when observed in families where they are residing, and to exert their influence to secure its observance where it has not been observed. And we consider the head of such a family as much authorized to require its observance on the part of such persons, as if they were natural members of the family: they are members of the same household; and the resolution of Joshua was, that he and his *house* should “serve the Lord.”

3rd. *We observe that the silence of the scriptures respecting the circumstances of any duty, is not sufficient to absolve us from the performance of that duty, when its substance is enjoined.* For instance, if it be plain from the scriptures that family worship is a duty, then we are not at liberty to omit it, because we are not told precisely how often we should worship God, or at what particular time, whether before or after breakfast, or, if we may not be able to sing with a melodious voice, whether this circumstance will justify its omission or not. Now, we say that ignorance respecting the particular circumstances in which

a duty should be performed, will not render its performance the less binding, where the substance of the duty is plainly revealed, according to this principle we should not perform any outward duty, because there is no duty which we perform in which every circumstance connected with it is mentioned in the scriptures. Nay; according to this principle we should never love God, because we are not told how often in the day our minds should be engaged in acts of love, and how long our minds should be in this state at a time.

4th. *We observe, that where the substance of a duty is enjoined in the scriptures, or is apparent from reason, the circumstantialia are to be regulated by our own understanding.* It is given to us in the 112th Psalm as characteristic of the good man, that he orders his affairs with discretion. Now, this discretion is to be exercised about the circumstantialia of spiritual duties, as well as temporal duties, and we are under the same obligation to exercise this discretion, as we are to perform the duty itself; for the one is included in the other. For instance, if we are satisfied that family worship is a duty, then we are bound to study in the performance of that duty every circumstance that will most contribute to the edification of those who are engaged in it.

5th. *General rules must be understood as including particular cases.* When we find such a rule in the scriptures, we are under the same obligation to apply it to all those cases, which naturally or inferentially come under it, as if such cases were particularly specified. It is not necessary that a duty should be enjoined in the scriptures in so many words, to render it binding. All that is necessary is that the general rule there laid down, by which spiritual duties are enjoined, includes in it the particular duty. The Bible is addressed to us as *intelligent* beings: it supposes us to be possessed of understanding and reason, and it requires us to exercise these faculties. Whatever then, is fairly deducible from the scriptures, is as binding upon us as if it were commanded in express words; for there is scarcely any duty, respecting which, the circumstances of time, place, and situation, are particularly specified; and, consequently, if this were a sufficient excuse for neglect of duty, there are few, if any duties, which would be performed. These remarks we have made in anticipation of an objection that is often urged against the arguments which are adduced to prove that obligations are resting upon Christians to keep up the worship of God in their families.

Having made these few remarks, we shall endeavour

II. *To prove the duty of family worship.* And here we shall apply to two sources of proof; the law of nature, and the written law. Let it not be supposed that we appeal to the law of nature because we deem the written law insufficient to establish this duty. By no means. We believe the duty is plainly taught there. But we appeal to this law, that those who neglect it, may see that they are condemned by a *twofold* law; and that the very heathen will rise up in judgment against them. Nor are we to disregard the law of nature. It is stamped with the same authority as the written law; and where it speaks plainly its voice is to be heard with the same attention. By what other than this law was it that mankind were governed for more than two thousand years? And are we to suppose that there was no sin in the world before the delivery of the law on Sinai? Surely not. Nor are we to suppose that this law of nature was repealed by the written law. It still possesses the same autho-

city, and still obligates us to the same duties. The written law supposes those to whom it is given to be in possession of the law of nature. Thus, the apostle, in his epistle to the Corinthians, appeals to their understanding and reason for the confirmation of what he declared to them. "*I speak,*" says he, "*as to wise men, judge ye what I say.*" It is then brethren, as such, that I would address you on this subject; while I appeal to the law that is written upon your own hearts, for the proof of this duty. And this obligation appears,

1st. *From the infinite excellence of Jehovah, as an object of worship.* If you refer to Nehemiah ix. 5, you will find that it is declared, that the glorious name of Jehovah is "exalted above all blessing and praise." From this, then, it plainly appears, that our praises can never be in proportion to the divine excellence. Though we were to praise him with all our hearts, and though our time were continually employed in his praises, he would still be exalted above them; for his excellence is infinite, while our praises are but finite. But what are we to infer from this? Is it that we are not to praise and bless God at all? surely not. But we infer that we are to praise and bless him, according to the *measure of our capacity*. The infinitude of his excellence calls for the most exalted praises of which we are capable, in every capacity in which we may exist; if in every capacity, surely in the family capacity. Let us suppose, then, that you have endeavoured to the utmost of your capacity to worship God in the closet, and in the sanctuary. Has your homage, permit me to ask you, been in proportion to the excellence of that being who is the object of this homage? Surely not. He is exalted above all blessing and praise. Are you not bound, then, to add to these praises which you have rendered to God in the closet, and in the sanctuary, those of your family? for until you do so your praises are not according to your capacity. Now, does not the light of nature reveal the great God to you in the character of a most excellent being, and are you not taught by this light, that that being ought to be worshipped in your family, in a *family capacity*?

2d. *The reasonableness of this duty may be clearly seen from the dependence of families, as such, upon God.* We are all dependent upon God for our individual existence. "In him we live, and move, and have our being;" and does not this individual dependence upon God, lay a foundation for individual homage? But are we dependent upon him only in our individual capacity? Does not the same God who preserves the being of a husband, preserve the relation of a husband? and does not the same God who preserves the being of a wife, preserve the relation of a wife? and so of parents and children. Now, if our dependence upon God as individuals calls for homage and praise, surely our dependence upon him as husband and wife, parent and child, master and servant, calls for the same, and, therefore, there is an obligation resting on those who are the heads of families, to render to God in a family capacity the homage and praise which are due unto him.

3d. *The obligation to worship God in the family appears from the nature of man, as a social being.* None will deny that the worship rendered by a creature must be according to the nature of that creature. Man, then, being possessed of a social nature, his worship must also be social. But here we may be told, that the public worship of God in the sanctuary is answerable to this; and that therefore family worship is not required. To this it may be replied, that the relation

of a family is the first relation in which man exists as a social being; indeed, the relation itself is prior, in the order of nature, to all other relations, and, therefore, has prior obligations. Our first parents could worship God, as social beings, in no other way than in a family capacity, and can we suppose that the obligation to worship him in this way could cease by the adventitious formation of societies, so long as the natural qualities which gave rise to this obligation would continue? By no means; the very nature of man, then, as a social being, shows the duty of family worship.

4th. *The obligation to worship God in a family capacity appears from the fact that families are of Divine constitution.* The family relation, brethren, is a *distinct* relation, established by the God of nature. It is "He who setteth the solitary in families," and, therefore, to him is due the worship of families. But how can this debt be paid in any other capacity than a family capacity? It cannot be paid, nor will the payment be accepted by God, in any other way. Families are moral persons; and as such stand in a distinct moral relation to God, and therefore owe him distinct homage; and we might as well suppose that the worship which one individual renders to God, will be reckoned to another, as to suppose that the worship of the individuals who compose the family, offered in an individual capacity, will be reckoned to the family as such. Is there not honour due from the members of a family to the head, as the head of the family? but God says, "If I be a father, where is my honour, and if I be a master, where is my fear?" He claims to be the Founder and Preserver of all the families of the earth, and, therefore, he claims from them that homage which is his due.

5th. *We infer the duty of family worship from the great design for which families were instituted.* And what was this design? Was it merely that the earth should be inhabited? No, it was that his name and his praise might be preserved, and transmitted from age to age. If this was the original design of the conjugal relation, it will certainly appear that it was the design of the family relation; for the former is the foundation of the latter; and that such was the design of the conjugal relation, is evident from Malachi ii. 15: "Did he not make one?" that is, one for one, or one couple. "Yet had he the residue of the Spirit," that is, to impart life to others, had he been so pleased. "And wherefore one?" "that he might seek a godly seed." From this, then, it plainly appears, that the design of God, in separating mankind into distinct families, was, that they might be nurseries of religion: this was the original design of their formation. He could, for he had "the residue of the Spirit," have created ten thousand human beings; but he would create but one couple, that he might have "a godly seed." Now, are we not to infer the duty of family worship from this express design? Can we suppose that the formation of mankind into families was designed by the God of nature for the promotion of godliness, and yet God is not to be acknowledged in families, by regular acts of worship? The supposition is absurd in the highest degree. Are there any in this house who do not worship God in their families? To such persons we would say, you are acting in direct opposition to the end for which families were instituted, and you have no ground to expect the blessing of God upon your families; you have no right to expect piety in your children, and the eternal salvation of their souls.

6th. *The duty of family worship appears from the relation of*

the several parts of the family to each other. We have seen, that the relation which families, as distinct societies, sustain to God, obligates to family worship. But not only does this obligation arise from the relation which the family, as a moral person, sustains to God, but also from the relation in which they stand to one another. There is a mutual connexion between the several parts of this moral person: and does not this connexion lay a foundation for family religion? Does the family, as a whole, enjoy the favour and protection of an indulgent Providence? Should not the gratitude of all be expressed? Or, is any member of the family blessed with prosperity, and shall not all the members of the family rejoice in it, and unite in offering up the sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving to the God of families for his mercies? But where is the family who has not ground for praise and thanksgiving? Is not the very relation itself a blessing, as we have seen? And so long as this relation lasts, so long should the kindness of God meet with our thankful acknowledgments. The blessings of God, then, to the family, or to any of its members, call for gratitude and praise. But are there no family blessings to be invoked? Are not the constant favour and watchful guardianship of the God of families ever needed? and, if needed, can they be looked for without prayer and supplication? How many sins against God are daily committed in the family, and are not these sins to be confessed? How often are members of families chargeable with treating one another unkindly, or with leading one another into sin by an evil example or advice; and are not these things to be acknowledged, and a pardon to be pleaded by the family as such, at a throne of grace? But in addition to those grounds of family worship, which are common to every family, there are many families who have trials and temptations and afflictions, that are peculiar to themselves: now all these peculiarities present special calls to the performance of this duty.

7th. *The obligation upon heads of families to keep up the worship of God in their families, appears from the fact, that their families are sacred trusts committed by God to their care.* Children, we are told, are “the *heritage* of the Lord:” and shall we not infer that the great Proprietor, who has given this heritage, will require its cultivation? Yes, parents, the responsibility of that relation in which you stand to your children is great indeed. Remember that the eternal interests of their souls are committed to your care; God has given you absolute power over them, and, think you, does he not require you to exercise it in such a way as shall most promote his glory, and their everlasting good? And can you exercise it in this way without keeping up regularly the worship of God in the family of which he has made you the head and guardian? If you, then, believing husbands, have any regard for the important trust that has been committed to you as heads of families;—if you desire that she whom you have vowed to love should be a partaker with you of the grace of life;—believing wife, if you desire that he upon whom you have set your tenderest affections should be brought to a saving interest in Christ;—parents, if you would have those children whom God has given you, to be translated into the “kingdom of God’s dear Son;”—masters, if you have love for the souls of your servants, and if you would not bring upon you the blood of their souls, let me exhort you, let me beseech you, to endeavour, to the utmost of your capacity, to maintain the

worship of God in your families. Such are some of the rational grounds upon which we would found the duty of family worship. You will observe that we have not appealed to the scriptures directly for proof;—we have reserved this for another occasion, as the scripture proofs to which we wish to call your attention are so abundant that our time would not permit us to give them, at present, a fair examination.

We have considered the character of God as the most excellent of all beings, and, consequently, the most worthy of all praise in every capacity in which it is possible for man to exist,—we have referred you to that dependence which we have upon God as families,—to the social nature of man,—to the divine constitutionality of families,—to the great design for which they were instituted,—to the relation which the several parts of a family sustain to each other,—and, in fine, we have adverted to the relation which the head of the family sustains to all its members, as their trustee. Do not these considerations show us clearly the obligation resting upon every head of a family to say with Joshua, “As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord?” If there were nothing in the scriptures or the subject, would not such a resolution appear to be highly reasonable? What, then, brethren, are we to think of those who neglect the worship of God in their families,—shall we call them Christians? Ah! I know not how they can sustain the character. I do not wish to pronounce sentence upon any man, but how will such a character stand the test of that law, which is written upon their own hearts? How will that family, where the worship of God has never been observed, compare with the families of the poor heathen, upon whose darkened souls the Bible has never shed its heavenly and divine light? Will not these children of nature rise up in judgment, and condemn professing Christians; for, though their gods were idols, yet we find that they had their household gods, which they called *Lares*, and *Penates*. Such were, no doubt, the gods that were taken away by the daughter of Laban; and such were, no doubt, the carved image, the ephod, terraphim, and the molten image, that were in the house of Micah. These domestic gods are to be found in the houses of all modern Pagans of whom we have heard. Not only have these deluded heathen gods which they publicly adore, but each family has its own deity, to which *domestic* adoration is paid. Now, shall the degraded son of nature, who worships stocks and stones, have his household god, and shall the worshipper of the living and true God be without his? Does not the voice of nature cry out against it? Their family religion, it is true, is an idolatrous religion, but, though idolatrous, it shows us that family religion is the dictate of reason and nature,—as the worship of idols shows us, that the idea of God is natural to man, and not the result of revelation. With these few remarks we shall dismiss the subject for the present, hoping that you will lay the things which you have heard seriously to heart;—and that you, who are heads of families, and who have hitherto neglected this duty, will do so no more? but resolve, in dependence upon divine grace, with Joshua of old, “As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.”

(To be continued.)

ART. II.—*A Sermon of the Rev. Thomas Hamilton.*

Heb. x. 31: "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God."

THIS proposition, so replete with terror, stands in an epistle, of which the design was to display the glories of the gospel. It is found in the practical part of that epistle, where the object of the inspired correspondent of the Hebrews was, to enforce the improvement of the riches of divine grace; which teaches us that the heralds of the cross, by making known the terrors of the Lord, are to persuade men, that it is no less their duty to discharge the artillery of heaven, than to blow the gospel trumpet; to direct them to listen to the thunders, and contemplate the flames of Sinai, as well as to invite them to come to mount Zion, the city of the living God, to Jesus the mediator of the covenant, and the blood of sprinkling. He, into whose lips grace was poured, who was anointed to proclaim glad tidings to the meek, sometimes spoke in legal thunders. He proclaimed, not only the acceptable year of the Lord, but the day of vengeance of our God. It was he, who said to the scribes and pharisees, "Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell?" The unquenchable fire and gnawing worm are repeated thrice in the compass of six verses. Fear is a most powerful spring of action, and though its influence in religion is not to be supreme, yet it is proper to indulge it to a certain degree. Let sinners therefore in Zion be afraid, let fearfulness surprise the hypocrites. "Let us all fear, lest a promise being left us of entering into rest, any of us should seem to come short of it through unbelief." The apostle having explained the excellency of the Christian profession, from its nature, author, and privileges, exhorts the Hebrews, in this chapter, to hold it fast: verse 23: "Let us hold fast the profession of our faith, without wavering." He enforces steadfastness in the faith, from the consideration of the awful judgment which would overtake apostates, verse 26, 27: he shows that their punishment would be in proportion to the excellency of the privileges despised, and the glory of the mysteries renounced. And to show that he was not uttering idle things, he cites the words of the God of vengeance himself, verse 30; as an inference, then, from the whole, he makes the declaration, "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God." By the hand of God, we are to understand, sometimes, his authority; hence the promises of the Father, concerning his Son. "His arm shall rule for him; I will set his hand in the sea, his right hand in the rivers." Sometimes the hand of God denotes his mercy: Zech. xiii. 7: "And I will turn mine hand upon the little ones;" that is, his hand of mercy would be extended to those whom Christ represented, when the sword of justice was sheathed in his bowels. Sometimes it denotes his power. "The Lord hath sworn by his right hand, and by the arm of his strength;" "Awake, awake, put on strength, O arm of the Lord;" and sometimes it denotes the vengeance of God, or an exertion of his power, to execute the dictates of his justice, as in the text. It is proper to remark, that most generally, when the justice of God is intended, the hands of God are spoken of. Sometimes temporal judgments, as immediately inflicted by God, are denoted by his hands. "Let us fall," said David, "into the hands of the Lord, and not into the hands of man." Sometimes, spiritual and eternal judgments are intended, as in the awful declaration under consideration. By falling

"into the hands of the Lord," we are to understand, subjection to his vengeance. To be "hid in the hollow of" God's "hand," is to enjoy his protection. To be "gathered in his arms" as a shepherd, is to enjoy his love, sympathy, and fellowship. But to fall into his hands is to be "punished with everlasting destruction from his presence, and the glory of his power." It is proposed to make some observations concerning "falling into the hands of the living God," and then prove the truth of the proposition, that "it is a fearful thing to fall into his hands."

I. It is proposed to speak about "falling into the hands of the living God; and I shall take notice of the *import*, the *time*, and the *necessity* of impenitent sinners "falling into the hands of God."

1. It imports that God is their *enemy*. Man, at his creation, as he possessed the divine image, and was obedient to the divine will, was the object of the divine favour. But having lost the image and rebelled against the authority of God, he has rendered himself obnoxious to his vengeance. "God is angry with the wicked every day." "He hates all the workers of iniquity." His soul loathes them, considered as polluted, and burns with indignation against them, considered as guilty creatures. This abhorrence and displeasure flow from the purity and justice of his nature. He must cease to be what he is, before he can be pleased with them. It implies that he has *proclaimed* his displeasure. He is actually at war with them. The threatenings of his word; the frowns of his Providence: the reproofs of his deputy in their souls, namely, conscience, are evidences of his hatred. But ah, notwithstanding, they often presume upon his reconciliation with them; they put an erroneous construction upon the language of his law and of his providence; they speak peace to themselves, when God says "there is no peace to the wicked." It imports that he is a *vigilant* as well as an avowed enemy. Though he may permit them to carry on a warfare with him, yet his eye is fixed on them for evil. He is waiting until that time shall come, which will render their falling into his hands most for his glory. They may imagine that he is unobservant, "The Lord seeth not," "The Lord hath forsaken the earth." But let them know, that "his eyes run to and fro through the whole earth, beholding the evil as well as the good;" "his presence fills heaven and earth," he observes all their doings and their movements. He hears all their idle, vain, and blasphemous words. He perceives all the emotions of their hearts; the secret ebullitions of pride, enmity, and rebellion. It imports that he is a *fierce* enemy; his vigilance over his enemies is the vigilance of the lion and the leopard. Hos. xiii. 7, 8, "Therefore, I will be unto them as a lion; and as a leopard, by the way, so will I observe them:" the eye which observes them, flashes with anger, and nothing prevents him from swallowing them in his wrath, but his long-suffering patience. It imports that he is a *wise* and *active* enemy; his enemies do not fall into his hands by chance, as sometimes one enemy falls into the hands of another; but they fall into his hands in virtue of his wisdom and power. "He is wise in heart, and mighty in strength; who hath hardened himself against him and prospered?" Though his enemies may go on in rebellion against him, for a great while, yet God so overrules and controls them, that they will undoubtedly fall into his hands at last.

2. *When* do sinners fall into the hands of God?

1st. At their birth. They "are conceived in sin, and brought

forth in iniquity." They come into the world under the imputation of the sin of their federal head and natural stock, Adam. Hence, they often fall from the womb and the cradle, into the hands of God.

2nd. In life. Sometimes they feel, in a certain degree, the vindictive grasp of God's hands in this world. They are rendered terrors to themselves and to all around them. As saints experience the joys of heaven, on earth, so reprobates sometimes feel the pains of hell, before they reach the abodes of everlasting darkness. Witness Cain, Saul, Judas, and others.

3d. At death. Then they fall more fully into the hands of God. In their birth they are exposed to his hands. In life, they sometimes get strokes which deeply wound their spirits; but at death they fall into his hands: they are cast into hell; they are "driven away in their wickedness;" they are "punished with everlasting destruction."

4th. At the last day: then their whole persons will fall into his hand. At death their souls will fall into his hands, but at the great day their bodies as well as their souls shall feel its stroke. The body that was born, died, and mouldered in the grave under the sentence of the divine law, will now be subjected to the full execution of it; and the soul, now united to the body, will feel more sensibly the pressure of God's avenging hand.

5th. Through eternity: as there will be an endless progression in sinning, so will there be in suffering: consequently, sinners will be for ever falling "into the hands of the living God." The grasp of his hands will become closer, and their weight heavier through eternity.

3. There is an *absolute necessity* that impenitent sinners should "fall into the hands of the living God."

1st. For the satisfaction of Divine justice. Sin is a debt, the punishment of it is a payment of the debt: this payment the justice of God demands from all sinners, or from their surety.

2nd. For the honour of his divine majesty. "God is a great God, and great king, exalted above all gods: he is clothed with honour and majesty," notwithstanding sinners do not reverence and fear him. He issues commands and denounces threatenings; but they refuse to obey or to fear. Now he is determined, that if they will not obey him, they shall fear him. He will be glorified either by them, or upon them; if they will not honour him actively, they shall do it passively.

3rd. For the conviction of sinners. In this life they are often entertaining and indulging doubts concerning the truth and importance of divine things: they would now fondly hope that there is no God; that the Bible is false, and that there is no future state of retribution. To convince them, therefore, of these truths, they shall "fall into the hands of the living God." They shall not be left to doubt whether there be a God, and whether the threatenings of his word shall be realized or not; whether the representations which ministers gave of the torments of hell, are true or not; whether the soul be valuable, or an interest in Christ important, and necessary; whether sin be an exceeding bitter thing, and all the pursuits and pleasures of this world vain. All the doubts which they cherished concerning these points will be removed, when they "fall into the hands of God."

4th. For humbling their pride. Their hearts are full of pride, enmity, and rebellion against God: "they set their mouths against the heavens;" they surely say as Pharaoh did, "Who is the Lord? I

know not the Lord, neither will I obey his voice:" they say, therefore, unto God, "Depart from us, for we desire not the knowledge of thy ways." They refuse to submit to his law, his grace, or his providence; they "strive with their Maker;" God is therefore resolved to subdue them. Those proud and rebellious hearts which will not submit to his word, shall be broken by his power; and though they will never cease to oppose and hate him, they will cease to despise and slight him: they will form a just estimate of all his perfections; they will know the greatness of his power, by feeling it; they will fully appreciate his favour, from the want of it; they will see the purity and justice of his nature, in the flames which will eternally surround and devour them.

5th. For a warning to others. Thus, "he spared not the old world, but brought in a flood upon the world of the ungodly, and turned the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes," making them *an example* unto those who after should live ungodly: they were "set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire;" the sufferings of the ungodly will be an everlasting monument of divine justice, when "the smoke of their torment shall ascend up for ever and ever.

II. It is proposed to illustrate the truth of the proposition, namely, "that it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God;" which will appear from the following circumstances.

1. From the impression which the apprehension of falling into the hands of God, has produced upon the mind. How great the impression which this apprehension produces upon the *convinced* sinner! The mind which was formerly sunk in deep security, it fills with awful solicitude: the conversation which was vain and frivolous is now solemn, and taken up in anxious inquiries how to escape "the wrath which is to come." The countenance which wore the aspect of levity, is now clothed with solemnity, and bespeaks the deep concern of the mind: he would give all that he possesses, he would give the treasures of the universe, were they his, to have security against his "falling into the hands of the living God." The enjoyments of life become tasteless, the pleasures of sin terrible; sleep forsakes his eye, joy is a stranger to his heart, and his spirits are drunk up with the arrows of the Almighty. "He is chastened with pain upon his bed, and the multitude of his bones with strong pain, so that his life abhorreth bread, and his soul dainty meat," "His flesh is consumed away, that it cannot be seen, and his bones that were not seen stick out." How strong the impression which this apprehension produces upon the *deserted saint*! Though believers are the dear children of God, yet are they sometimes left to conclude that they are the objects of his displeasure. Accordingly, they "write bitter things against themselves." "The pains of hell take hold upon them;" in their apprehension God's "wrath lieth hard upon them;" his "fierce wrath goeth over them." They are "afflicted and ready to die;" while they "suffer God's terrors, they are distracted." "Deep calleth unto deep, at the noise of God's water spouts; all his waves and billows pass over them." This was the situation, sometimes, of David, Heman, and Job. How fearful the impressions which the forebodings of *reprobates* sometimes produce upon their mind. Though surrounded by friends and cheerful companions, though they have access to every temporal source of pleasure and amusement, though loaded with honours and rolling in afflu-

ence, they have been filled with horror. Hence, when Paul reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come, "Felix trembled." How terrific the impression which an apprehension of falling into the hands of the living God produces, even upon the devils: they "believe and tremble," under an idea that their doom was approaching sooner than they expected, they said to Christ, when on an errand of mercy in our world, "*Art thou come to torment us before the time?*" The prospect, the distant prospect of the wrath of God makes these powerful and haughty fiends to tremble. Now, if the apprehension of God's vengeance produces such terror, how fearful must it be to fall under it!

2. From the impression which the *partial* infliction of his wrath produces upon the mind. There have been some instances of persons being not merely under apprehension of wrath, but under wrath itself in this world: for example, Cain, Judas, Spira, Voltaire, and others. Cain declared that his punishment was greater than he could bear. Judas was so full of remorse and wrath, that life became intolerable, and, therefore, he "chose strangling and death rather than life." Spira expressed a desire to be in hell, that he might know the utmost of what he was to suffer. And Voltaire is stated to have been so full of the fury of the Lord in his last moments, as to render it impossible even for his infidel companions to remain in his apartment. If, then, it be so fearful to fall into the hands of God in this world, what must it be to fall into them in the world to come? If a few drops of wrath produce such effects, what must be the influence when "God will rain snares, fire and brimstone, a horrible tempest upon the wicked?" If a few sparks have such power, how awful will the energy of that fire be, which will burn to the lowest hell? Ah! the wrath which God inflicts upon sinners now, is mercy compared with the wrath which is in reserve for them. It bears no more proportion to it than the drop of the bucket does to the ocean; than the gentle dew to the torrents of rain which fall from the opening clouds, or the zephyr which fans the grass, to the tornado which overturneth the oaks and the cedars. Oh! sinners "flee, flee from the wrath which is to come." God is now willing to embrace you in his arms. They are extended. Fly to them before you fall into his hands.

3. From the impression which the full infliction of his wrath produces upon the damned. They are represented as "weeping, wailing and gnashing their teeth." These are expressions of no common pain or misery. The wretched victims of Divine justice not only weep, which is the usual effect of sorrow in this life, but they wail, which indicates pain; pain which is not to be signified by the falling tear, or the countenance of grief, but proclaimed by lamentation and crying; they not only wail, but gnash their teeth in unutterable anguish.

4th. From the nature and degree of the wrath which will be inflicted upon those who fall into the hands of God. With regard to the nature of it, it is impossible for us fully to understand it. "Who knows the power of his wrath? According to his fear, so is his wrath." We know that it is Divine, consequently it must be wrath worthy of God. The wise man says, "The wrath of a king is as the roaring of a lion." How dreadful then must be the wrath of the King of kings! With regard to the degree of his wrath, it will be

intolerable. This appears from the *figures* by which it is represented. It is compared to fire, to a furnace of fire, to a lake of fire and brimstone, to a tempest of fire. One of these figures gives us a fearful idea of the wrath of God, but when they are all taken together, how overwhelming is the representation! Fire, which produces the most acute sensation of pain. A furnace of fire, which contains an intense degree of heat. A lake of fire, which will not be drained or exhausted. A tempest of fire, which burns and heats upon those exposed to it with resistless energy. "And who can dwell with everlasting fire, or with devouring flames?" Sinners who refuse to abandon those courses which lead to hell, are accustomed, in prospect of it, to clothe themselves with courage and resolution, to bear its torments as well as they can. But this shows that they have carnal and absurd ideas of the punishment of hell, as well as of the happiness of heaven. However great their pride and courage, their hearts will become like water, like wax before the fire, the moment they fall into the hands of the living God. "Can thine heart endure," says God, "or can thine hands be strong in the day that I will deal with thee?" The intolerable nature of the punishment of hell appears from its being compared to an eternal death or dying. The body never dies but in consequence of disease which it cannot bear, under which it finally sinks, after having struggled and groaned in ineffectual efforts to support itself. This is some representation of the case of the soul in hell. It will strive to bear up under the heavy hand of God. It will groan and weep and lament. But as there is no proportion between its strength, and the weight which it is under, it will sink and die. This death of the soul does not however, imply annihilation of it. It will never lose its being, nor perception, nor consciousness. In this respect it will be always dying, but never dead. The intolerable nature of the punishment of hell will appear from the circumstance of its excluding every kind and degree of comfort or relief. If our pain is great, yet if we enjoy some cordials or support, it is the more easily borne. The pains of death may be mitigated by such means. But there will be no merciful ingredient in the cup of the Lord's fury. It will be pure unmingled wrath. There will be an absence of all comfort or relief. There shall be no intermission or mitigation: "They shall be tormented day and night." The furious tempest will never cease or abate; the fiery billows will never, for a moment, sleep or cease to roll. The enraged furnace will never suspend or assuage its fury. There will be no cooling stream nor fountain, no, not a drop of water to cool their tongues, or quench their thirst, or revive their sinking hearts. There will be none to whom any complaint may be made, or from whom any sympathy may be expected. None to shed the friendly tear or utter a consolatory word. All friendship and sympathy will be extinguished for ever. Nay, on the contrary, there will be an eternal exchange of the most bitter reproaches and curses between the nearest relations and those who were the most affectionate friends in this world. There will be *no hope* of intermission, alleviation, or end of their torments. There is nothing which tends more to support the mind in distress than hope; the hope that serene and happy days will yet come. But all hope will be banished from the breasts of the *damned*; which leads to the remark that the dreadfulness of falling into the hands of God appears,—

5. From the *duration* of his wrath. Those who fall into the hands of the living God will never get out of them. If there were any assurance that after a lapse of millions of ages, they would be released, how would it cheer them! But all the prisoners of justice are prisoners of despair. Never, never will the hand of God be removed from them! They will eternally sink under its pressure. After as many millions of years have passed as there are stars in the heavens, drops in the ocean, leaves on the trees, or grains of sand by the sea shore, their torment will be as far from an end as when it first commenced. Oh! overwhelming thought. For if they obtain a release it must be

1st. By their making satisfaction to Divine justice. God has declared that he "will by no means clear the guilty." The utmost farthing of penal debt must be discharged before liberty can be proclaimed to the infernal captives, and "the opening of the prison to them that are bound" by chains of darkness. But this satisfaction they will be unable to make. They are under a natural inability to sustain the penalty of the Divine law, and under a moral inability to obey the precepts of it.

2nd. By overcoming the omnipotence of God. But this, it is needless to say, will be impossible. "Do we provoke the Lord to anger, are we stronger than He?"

3rd. By eluding his grasp and making their escape from his hands. But this will be impossible. Malefactors have sometimes made their escape from the hands of the executioners of justice, and from the place of confinement. But none will be able to escape from the hand of God, for it is omnipotent, or elude the eye of God, for it is omniscient. They cannot unlock their prison, for Christ has the keys of hell and death, and shutteth and no man openeth, they cannot break their prison, for its walls are stronger than walls of brass, and are surrounded by an impassable "gulf."

4th. By God's relenting, and setting them at liberty. But God will not let them go until they have paid the utmost farthing of the debt for which they have been arrested. In doing this, he would act inconsistently with the character of a righteous judge, who should never allow his compassion to subvert his justice. Will not man permit God to treat his enemies, when they fall into his hands, in the way that they would treat theirs? "If a man find his enemy, will he let him go well away?" No; yet they repine at the conduct of God, in confining his implacable enemies when they fall into his hands.

6. But all the examples and proofs which have been given of the truth of the proposition, only faintly exhibit the Divine displeasure, when compared with the sufferings of the incarnate Son of God. The blood that he sweat in Gethsemane, the groans and cries that he uttered on Calvary, display the terribleness of falling into the hands of the living God, more than all the pains of hell for ever. If the wrath of God made an infinite Person cry out, "My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death," "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" how fearful must it be! "If such things were done in the green tree, what shall be done in the dry?"

From the view taken of this subject, we may see—

1st. The evil nature of sin; were it not an exceeding vile thing in its nature, its punishment could not be so exceeding bitter.

2nd. The happiness of the people of God. Instead of falling into the hands of God, his everlasting arms are placed underneath them for their support, and around them for their protection. The hand of God is lifted and stretched out for their defence against all their enemies.

3rd. The love of God, in sending his Son into the world to rescue his enemies from the hands of Divine justice. He lets sinners go, and lays hold on his Son, his only Son, his beloved Son; O what grace!

4th. We see the heinous nature of unbelief, which casts contempt both upon the wrath and the love of God; despises both the threatenings of the law, and the promises of the gospel.

5th. We see how great is the insensibility of sinners. Notwithstanding all the intimations which God gives of their danger, yet they remain secure. Some indulge the hope of shunning the wrath which is to come, without any warrant for such a hope.

ART. III.—*Voluntary Associations.*

MR. EDITOR,—It has been interesting to witness the late discussion in your periodical on the subject of voluntary associations. I looked on in silence, believing that you were fully competent to sustain the negative; until the October number, received a short time since, informed me that you had arrived at the conclusion, that they are warrantable. With all my high estimation of yourself, and of those who have supported that side of the question, you must allow me to dissent from your decision. And if it be consistent with your plan, you will permit me to state my reasons for an opposite opinion.

There are many who like myself cannot with their present light accord with your conclusion. Discussion may bring us to see eye to eye.

Besides, it is in vain to cover up the elements of discord in a community. The word of God, the divinely sanctioned practice of the church in past ages, the lamentable effects of it in shattering some religious societies in our own times, are so many testimonies against such a pernicious course. But it is by no means plain to me that the discussion of this point will either enkindle or perpetuate strife.

Further, the magnitude of the subject requires more investigation; being one of the most important of those questions that are now agitating the world. With your permission, therefore, I will proceed, confining myself, for the present, to the arguments used in the affirmative.

Numerous definitions, or rather descriptions, of voluntary associations have been given by those who advocate them. These descriptions are all characterized by one feature—a frittering down of the principle on which they rest to a mere nothing—at least until it becomes so little, as to be almost intangible. Now if they are such *harmless nothings*, where is their utility? Is not this the very method by which Lot pleads for the devoted city, "Spare it for it is little?" It forms the apology of Ephraim, in the midst of all his apostacy and idolatry, "In all my labours they shall find no iniquity in me that were sin." It is this kind of reasoning that saves many a right eye, and many a right hand from the burning flames to which they should be consigned. But does not this description contradict the assertions which many periodicals have made, of the omnipotence

of such institutions, in correcting the evils with which society has been perplexed? Are not some of your own correspondents chargeable with this contradiction, in first placing them on a level with "log-rollings" and "house-raising," and afterwards ascribing to them the mighty influence of arousing the British nation to abolish slavery, and the United States to abandon the use of intoxicating liquors? If they are of the same nature with a log-rolling, or house-raising, we would, surely, find them conducted in the same manner. But what page of history records the constitution, and laws, and names of presidents, vice presidents, secretaries, and lecturers of a log-rolling, or house-raising? When did men, acting rationally, meet and adjourn from day to day, and from week to week, and from year to year, sending out lecturers and stump-orators to awaken the sympathies of the community for the purpose of rolling logs, or raising houses? If societies are no more than this, we had better take the good old way, which the western pioneers have always followed; and the logs will be rolled, and the houses raised, while we are talking about it on the newly invented plan.

The parallel that is drawn between these institutions and joint stock companies is very defective. The latter, being chartered and regulated by civil law, are directly the reverse of societyism. They are state institutions. Were men to start up, and under the pretence of the state's being insufficient for accomplishing these objects, organize themselves, and exercise *assumed* privileges, they would be a specimen of *natural* societyism. Such societies have existed. But have they been generally beneficial? The history of the west, and of the world, if we are not mistaken, will answer *no*. It will tell of their having monopolized the land trade in the west, so as almost entirely to prevent the poor man from procuring a home; until legislative enactments, to some extent, put it beyond their power. And still, by going in advance of the emigrants, and by purchasing *indirectly* large quantities of land, and retailing it at enormous prices to the poor settlers, they exercise a very pernicious influence. The principle, too, is of general application. Admit it, and what may be the consequence? Our farmers, mechanics, and merchants may all organize for the purpose of enhancing the value of their various commodities, each endeavouring to extort from the other; and thus will every conflicting principle of human nature be aroused; and every little neighbourhood will be *constituted*, and *officered*, and arrayed in the habiliments of petty warfare. Such companies have the power of extortion, and are therefore unscriptural—they monopolize, and are therefore opposed to equal rights—they are aristocratical, and consequently anti-republican. Were these even justifiable, they would utterly fail to present the true nature of societyism, the one proposing merely a *natural*, the other a *moral* object. Would that voluntary associations were nothing more than individuals uniting their strength in a proper way, for the attainment of a natural end! But from their almost unbounded popularity—from the resources they may command—and from the achievements of which they boast, it is evident, that they threaten to cast into the shade the heaven-born institutions of God, and to inflict on society calamities more deplorable than those which they propose to remove.

It would be difficult to define voluntaryism, since neither its *genus* nor *species* is found in either church or state. Claiming paternity from neither of these divine institutions, it has sprung up beyond the limits

of both, in the wide and wild field of human conjecture, which neither the precepts of God's laws, nor the promises of his glorious gospel illumine. Nor is a definition necessary. We may learn its nature from its operations. When we turn our attention to a voluntary association, we see a certain class called officers supposed to be vested with certain powers—another class called members over whom the former preside—a constitution and laws by which all are governed—and certain moral ends for the accomplishment of which they combine. Here, in short, we find every element of formal organization.

It is with societies as they have existed, and still exist, that we have to do, and not with a mere abstraction, or with some association that might be formed on correct principles. Nor is it of importance which of these we select. Tract, Bible, Sunday School, Temperance, and Abolition societies, having a common origin, must stand or fall together. Neither is it the object contemplated about which we would contend. We freely grant, that the ends proposed by these institutions are among the most noble that ever engaged the energies of intellectual beings. But the controversy respects the means by which these ends are to be attained. It will certainly be admitted that God, in his word, not only points out the work to be done, but the means by which it is to be done. He not only commands us to pray, but fills our mouths with arguments. If he enjoins the remembrance of his Son's death, he puts into our hands the symbols of his body and blood. Does he require obedience to the powers that be, he specifies the very circumstances of that obedience.

Such being the state of the question, the first point to be settled is, whether these voluntary associations are a divinely sanctioned means of effecting the noble ends which they contemplate? In proof of the affirmative, your correspondents direct us to Matt. vii. 12; Heb. xiii. 3; Jas. i. 27; Prov. xxxi. 8, 9; xxiv. 11, 12; Rev. xix. 17; Prov. xxvii. 5, 6; Tim. v. 22; Heb. x. 24. This class of texts urges on us important duties. Were these acted out by men, in their appropriate spheres, the tyrant's sceptre would be broken, the slave-holders lash drop from his trembling hand, and the poor slave would open his eyes on a cloudless day of unconditional emancipation. They point out the objects which societyism aims to accomplish; but they do not directly reveal the means by which these objects are to be gained. Now all agree that these objects ought to be accomplished; and only differ about the means by which they are to be attained. And as these texts do not tell us *how* we are to remember them that are in bonds, as bound with them—*how* we are to visit the fatherless and widows—*how* we are to open our mouths for the dumb—*how* we should reprove sin in our neighbour, it is fairly a *petitio principii* or begging of the question, to advance them in settling the controversy. This is precisely the method pursued by the advocates of human psalmody. Because the duty of praise is urged in various parts of the Bible, they conclude that human songs may be used in God's worship as well as those which are divine. Their conclusion, too, is quite as logical and sound as that of those who argue, that because slavery should be abolished, voluntary associations as well as divine institutions may be employed in doing it.

It will be unnecessary to take up these texts separately, as any one may see, by a brief examination, that they embrace substantially the same general principles; and if, as we have seen, they will not

afford a warrant for societyism collectively, they cannot do so separately. As a specimen, however, of such proof, examine more particularly one of these: Jas. i. 27, "Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world." Like the others, this text cuts through the centre of every system of oppression. But does it tell us *how* we are to visit and relieve the wretched victims of it? Does it tell us directly or indirectly, that it must be done by tract, temperance, or abolition societies? Not a syllable of it points to such institutions. While it urges the duty, it leaves the *manner* to be determined by other parts of the same glorious revelation. Elsewhere the scripture directs us to prayer—to preaching—to contribution—to consolation—to pleading with our Mother as means of their relief; but those parts of the Bible which recognise voluntary societies, as hand-maids in this exalted work, have yet to be developed. Again, this precious portion of God's word defines the duty which it embraces as constituting the very essence of practical religion. If, then, it includes societies, they must be religious ordinances. Pray tell us, then, whether they belong to the public or private exercises of God's worship? Religious ordinances, too, are peculiar to the church. Is not this a new kind of church? Having only one term of communion, it admits those, and only those, to its fellowship, who accede to that one item of faith, without respect to their moral character: otherwise, though they might be profane, or idolaters, or Sabbath-breakers, some branches of the church have thrown their doors wide open to all persons, who are in good standing in their own society; but this new church unites in its pure religious worship, not only professed Christians of every name, but the world in all its glory of deism, infidelity, and atheism. Thus the temple of God no longer frowns on that of idols, but righteousness and unrighteousness, the mosque and the meeting-house, church and cathedral, light and darkness, Christ and Belial, are united in the closest brotherhood.

Our Lord's history of the good Samaritan is adduced, by some of your correspondents, as a warrant for voluntary associations. This was related by the Saviour, in reply to the lawyer's question, "Who is my neighbour?" It shows conclusively that our benevolence, instead of being confined to the unfortunate of any particular tribe, or nation, or clime, or colour, should embrace in its ample range, the vast expanse of the human family. But how it shows that this benevolence should be exerted through the medium of societyism, is to me a mystery. So it appeared to your correspondent: and he changes it to another case entirely, before it could be made to bear on his argument. The writer accordingly *supposes* that there had been ten, or twenty men, which the Samaritan single-handed could not have relieved—he is *supposed* to go and operate on the sympathies of the neighbourhood—they are *supposed* to assemble, to appoint a president, secretary, and purser; and thus panoplied, to repair to the scene of action. All this looks plausible; yet it lacks *one thing*, and that, in searching for a divine warrant, is *every thing*—it lacks the signature of Jesus Christ. He has not related such a tale in all his works. It is a mere fiction of fancy. Is it then candid to make a *supplement* to our Lord's history, and attempt to pass it off for the history itself? Had our Saviour introduced the case of a multitude of sufferers greater than the Samaritan could have relieved, his directions would,

no doubt, have been very different from that of drafting constitutions, appointing presidents, vice-presidents, secretaries, and pursers. Casting his eye over this huge globe, and beholding millions torn by spiritual, as well as natural thieves, he says not to his disciples, "Go and form voluntary societies," but "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature." Now *suppose* the Samaritan had acted on the combination plan. He comes, looks on the sufferer, and in the true spirit of unbelief says, "A lion is in the way." Distrusting the power of God's promise, he thinks he can do nothing without a company organized with all the formality of constitution, officers, and by-laws. Away he goes to act on the sympathies of the neighbourhood; but, unfortunately, for every one that he enlists on the side of compassion, he arouses one or more in opposition to the good work: the little community go to war, the one party endeavouring to go to the sufferer's relief, the other throwing obstacles in their way; and the poor fellow is left to die through the opposition which his own friends had stirred up in forming a society for his relief. A happier incident, illustrative of the principle opposite to that of societyism, could not have been selected. The magnanimous Samaritan lights upon a victim of misfortune. Without the tumult of a voluntary association he goes to work, and his efforts, by the divine blessing, are crowned with success so great as to encourage all others to "go and do likewise."

To this it may be replied that what one, in his individual capacity, has a right to do, all may unite in doing. Suppose, for the present, this position be granted. It only proves that individuals have a right to do what they have a right to do. The question is not whether individuals may act, or whether they may act in unison, but whether they may *voluntarily organize* to effect a moral object.

But it may be said, that organizing is mere form. It is just such form as we have in both church and state. And the organization of either of these is as simple as that of an abolition society. If the state has its officers, so has the society. Has the one its constitution and laws? so has the other. Does the state hold its county, state, and congressional meetings? so have societies their county, state, and national conventions. It is to be feared that this very circumstance is a snare in which many are in danger of being entrapped. They are so simple, and so nearly resemble divine institutions, where can there be any harm? So perhaps thought Nadab and Abihu with respect to offering incense, until the flaming wrath of God revealed their error, when it was too late for repentance? When Satan fails to seduce men entirely from the practice of religion and morality, he endeavours to lead them to rest in something that very nearly resembles them, though the real difference may be wide as the space which separates earth and heaven. And the nearer the resemblance, the greater is the danger of deception. An eminent historian says that "Julian the apostate, convinced of the mighty efficacy of preaching the gospel, and yet desiring its suppression, appointed preachers of infidelity through the various provinces of his empire." In every age the temple of idols has been erected near to the temple of the living God. The ark was once in the hands of the Philistines. It was not a resemblance, but a reality. What harm was it for them to carry it about? Might it not have united their energies, and inspired their courage, as well as that of the Israelites? It was out of place, in wrong hands, unaccompanied by a divine warrant, and the avenging

angel has perpetuated, by his ravages, the remembrance of their wickedness to all succeeding generations. If these institutions, therefore, be not from heaven, we should beware, lest, being seduced by them into the camp of the enemy, we fall beneath his plagues.

T. S. K.

ART. IV.—*Statement of the Associate Session of Xenia, to the Congregation under their Inspection, of their Authority from the Church and the Church's Head, for exercising the Discipline of the Church on those who offend by what is usually called, "occasional hearing."*

DEAR BRETHREN,—By the injunction of Zion's King, it is made our duty, not only to profess our faith in God, as our God, and our acknowledgment of him as our Lord, but to maintain firmly this profession when made. Heb. iv. 14, "Let us hold *fast* our profession;" x. 23, "Let us *hold fast* the profession of our faith *without wavering*." It is a matter, then, of the utmost importance, that we be correctly informed in relation to every thing inconsistent with such maintenance of our profession, and avoid it. The practice of attending upon the dispensation of the word in other churches we cannot but regard as being of this character, and, therefore, to be avoided, and, by instruction, exhortation, and the exercise of discipline, restrained. However, as a diversity of opinion prevails, to some extent, respecting the impropriety of this practice, and, to a still greater extent, respecting the warrant or authority from the church, for the exercise of discipline upon the offender, we have deemed it a duty, called for by the cause of suffering truth, to make to you a statement of the authority we have from the church and the church's Head, for exercising discipline upon those who offend in this matter.

We are constrained to believe, that if they who are involved in difficulties respecting the impropriety of this practice, would trace these difficulties to their origin, they would find them originating in the want of a thorough and deep-felt conviction of the *importance* of the truth and the maintenance of it, and of the *warrantableness* of our separation from, at least, some of the churches around us; we shall, therefore, in the first place, attempt the establishment of this position, viz., that the Associate church is in a state of *warrantable* separation from other churches.

Here three questions present themselves for our consideration, viz.:

I. Are there any points of difference between the principles of the Associate church and those of other churches?

II. Are those principles, which *distinguish* the profession of the Associate church from that of other churches, *true*—the principles of the Bible?

III. Does the denial, by other churches, of these *distinguishing* principles of our witnessing profession, or their refusal to embrace them, warrant our separate organization and the continuance of it; or should those principles have been made matters of forbearance, and should we, for the sake of union, *have gone, or now go* with them in their abandonment of them?

I. Are there any points of difference between the principles of the Associate church and those of other churches? This question,

it is plain, must be answered in the affirmative. It would be altogether inconsistent with the limits which must be set to this "statement" to attempt pointing out the difference, in principle, between the Associate church and *all* other churches, or even *many* of them. It must suffice to state *some* of the points of difference in principle between the Associate church and one or two of those whose profession approaches nearest our own. Among these we select the Reformed and Associate Reformed churches.

The Associate and Reformed churches differ chiefly on the following points, viz.:

1. The subject of magistracy; and here the primary difference respects what is necessary to the *being* of a magistrate. The Reformed church maintains that a due measure of Scriptural qualifications is necessary to the *being* of a lawful magistrate—that the infidelity of a ruler, in a nation where the light of the Gospel has been generally diffused, makes void his authority, and, consequently, that such a magistrate is not to be owned as a lawful one, or submitted to in his lawful commands, for conscience sake. It is true, a branch of this church has lately admitted the lawfulness of submission to the government of the United States, but in so doing they deny any change of principle, but profess to have discovered that this government, with its toleration of slavery, sabbath mails, &c., &c., is *such a scriptural government* as their principles require. The Associate church, on the contrary, maintains, that though this due measure of scriptural qualifications is necessary to the *well being* of a magistrate, yet it is not necessary to his *being* as such—that a person invested, by the consent of the people, with a right to rule over them, and, so long as he is countenanced by the majority of the nation and does not endeavour the overthrow of the civil and religious liberty of the nation, *is*, though destitute of this due measure of scriptural qualifications, a lawful magistrate, and to be acknowledged as such by obedience to his lawful commands for conscience sake. The difference between these churches in relation to what is necessary to the *being* of a lawful magistrate, when truly carried out, exhibits them as differing, on the subject of magistracy, in several other particulars, such as the *fountain* of the magistrate's authority and his duty or power *circa sacra*.

2. The subject of faith. The Associate church maintains that there is an *assurance* in the very nature of faith, as distinct from the assurance of sense, or the assurance that we are already partakers of grace. But the Reformed church, while they maintain that an assurance of sense may be obtained, are silent on the important question—whether there is assurance in the essence or nature of faith; or their sound is so indistinct or uncertain that it cannot be understood. Since our brethren of the Reformed church *must* have known that this was a matter of controversy in the Christian community—that this was a principle opposed by the great mass of professed Christians, their refusal to appear openly and closely on its side is to be regarded as an appearance against it, according to that word of our Lord, "He that is not with me is against me."

3. The extent of Christ's purchase. The Reformed church maintains that Christ purchased temporal benefits for believers. The Associate church maintains that Christ purchased the divine blessing on the temporal enjoyments of believers, or the gracious ordering

of them to their spiritual good and the glory of God; but denies that temporal enjoyments themselves, such as food and raiment, in their earthly and perishing nature, and as the means of supporting animal life, are purchased by Christ's death.*

The Associate and Associate Reformed Churches differ chiefly on the following points:

1. Testimony bearing. Though the Associate Reformed Church seem to agree with us that it is the duty of the church to appear as God's witness, yet they differ from us in regard to what constitutes a *faithful, fixed testimony*. The Associate church maintains that, as testimony for the truth supposes that truth is in controversy, a stated testimony, to be faithful, must not only contain an assertion of truth, but be opposed directly to the perverters and despisers of the truth. The Associate Reformed church maintains that a stated testimony is all that it ought to be, when it contains a mere assertion of truth, and, accordingly, they have nothing for a "fixed testimony," but an amended or modified copy of the "Confession of Faith;" they even regard a fixed testimony, when opposed directly to the perverters and despisers of truth, as extremely dangerous—they believe there is solid ground to fear that, in the present unhappy contentions which divide the church, it would be used by too many as the rallying point of party, and would inflame those wounds in the body of Christ which it should be our study and prayer to have speedily and thoroughly healed. Farther, the Associate church maintains, that a testimony, to be the testimony of a church, must be made a term of communion, and, accordingly, have made their testimony a term of communion in *all* cases. The Associate Reformed church makes what she calls her "fixed testimony" a term of communion in *some* cases, but not in *all*. The evidence of this will appear in the fourth point of difference.

2. The extent of Christ's purchase. The principle of the Associate church on this subject is as stated above in the third point of difference between us and the Reformed church. The Associate Reformed church has, on this subject, no avowed principle at all; the discordant materials of which this church was composed, finding they could not agree about this article of truth, agreed to lay aside a public and joint profession of it, and thus did, as a church, what they could to bury it.

3. Psalmody. The Associate church testifies in favour of the exclusive use of the scripture Psalms, and requires such use of them in the worship of God under all circumstances. The Associate Reformed church, in her constitution, prohibits the use by her "churches" or congregations only, of composures *merely* human, and lays her members under no restriction at all in this matter, when worshipping in any other than an "Associate Reformed church." Nor do they, in their "Act" or "occasional testimony" on this subject, make the substitution of devotional songs, composed by un-

* The author might have specified a fourth point of difference, namely,—

4th. The Associate church maintains, that, while Christ's kingly power, as Mediator, extends to all things, and is absolutely unlimited, he, nevertheless, exercises this power mediatorially to the church only. But the Reformed church maintains that this power is exerted mediatorially to the whole world as such. That is, she confounds all distinction between his *mediatorial* government of the church and Pagan nations, or Anti-Christian powers. [See an excellent article on this point in the last number, p. 385.—ED. REL. MON.]

inspired men, in the place of the scripture, songs *condemnable* in any but *ministers and congregations*: this act we cannot regard as containing any thing more explicit, on this subject, than their Constitution, which prohibits the use of uninspired songs only when worshipping "in Associate Reformed churches," or congregations.

4. Communion. The Associate church has always declared, openly and explicitly, against *occasional communion*. The Associate Reformed church never has. In their original constitution they required an approbation of the principles exhibited in the Confession of Faith, &c., as a term of admission to only "*fixed communion*," which plainly implied they would allow a communion with them *occasional*, or not fixed, and that this communion could be had without an approbation of the principles exhibited in the Confession of Faith, &c. In the act amending this Constitution (which act is still in force) a change of language, it is true, is used in expressing the "terms" of admission into this church; it runs thus: "The terms on which any person or persons shall be admitted as a member or members of the synod, or as a member or members of any congregation under the inspection of synod, are an approbation of the principles exhibited in the above-mentioned Confession," &c. If it had been really the intention of this church to disallow of occasional communion, it is plain that the most *obvious* and *easy* amendment of the article about communion would have been made by striking out the word "*fixed*." This, however, was not done, but the article was amended so as to read as above; and must not every person notice it as remarkable, that though the change of phraseology is very great, the very same idea is still expressed. The admission of "a person or persons as a member or members" of a church, is just an admission of them to *fixed* communion, and, consequently, still provides for occasional communion. So much for their admission of others to communion with them. Farther, they say something about the practice of going themselves into occasional communion with others. In their original constitution they say—"as occasional communion, in a divided state of the church, may produce great disorders, if it be not conducted with great wisdom and moderation, they esteem themselves, and the people under their inspection, invariably bound, in all ordinary cases, to submit to every restriction of their liberty which general edification renders necessary." In the act amending that Constitution the matter is made no better. They say "they do not consider themselves as left at liberty by this part of their Confession (chap. xxvi.) to hold organical communion with any denomination of Christians, that is inconsistent with a faithful and pointed testimony for revealed truth," &c. This implies that they regard organical communion, with at least some other denominations, as consistent "with a faithful and pointed testimony for revealed truth;" and, besides, as we are not told what is meant, or they mean by *organical* communion, and as they do not declare with what "*denominations*," or whether with many, or any of them, the holding of this "*organical* communion" is "inconsistent with a faithful and pointed testimony for revealed truth," we cannot but regard this amendment as altogether indefinite.

5. Public covenanting. The Associate church maintains that public religious covenanting is a moral duty, and, consequently, a

duty under the New Testament dispensation, that it is reasonable in the present divided state of the church, and in other seasons than seasons of persecution, and that the obligation of covenant engagements descends upon the church in after times. The Associate Reformed church, it is true, declare, in their original constitution, it is a moral duty under the gospel dispensation, yet they have cast all notice of the subject out of the Confession of Faith; in their act concerning the religious connexions of the synod, they say nothing about the morality of the duty, they never practise it, and have tolerated in their ministers, not only the denial of its morality, but the representation of it as a Judaizing observance, and all from both the pulpit and the press. Further, so far as we are able to gather their sentiments respecting the seasonableness of the duty, they regard it as seasonable only in times of persecution. Again, they consider the obligation of covenant engagements, by the church, as descending only upon the natural offspring of those who enter into them.

II. Are these principles, which *distinguish* the profession of the Associate church from that of other churches, true—the *principle of the Bible*? This question, it is also plain, must be answered in the affirmative by every person who has intelligently and candidly embraced the profession of the Associate church. The proof of the *truth* of these distinguishing principles, it is evident, cannot be attempted in this “statement,” nor does it properly belong to it, for we are now addressing *seceders*—persons who have professed *these* as *their* principles—persons who have made this profession under the character of *witnesses*, and are, therefore, bound to declare *nothing but the truth*. Addressing persons, then, who, we are in charity bound to believe, admit, or ought to admit the *truth* of our *distinguishing* principles, we may safely, and fairly too, answer this second question in the affirmative, and take the correctness of this answer for granted.

III. The only question remaining to be settled is this, namely, Does the *denial*, by other churches, of these *distinguishing principles* of our witnessing profession, or their refusal to embrace them, warrant our separate organization and the continuance of it; or should these principles have been made matters of forbearance, and should we, for the sake of union, *have gone*, or *now go* with them in their abandonment of them? The affirmative of the former member of this question, and the negative of the latter, being the same, we assume, and humbly conceive our support from the Word of God is abundant. Rom. xvi. 17. “Mark them who cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned, and avoid them.” 2 Thess. iii. 6. “Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the traditions which ye received of us.” Prov. xxiii. 23. “Buy the truth and sell it not.” Surely we are taught by these passages that however desirable peace and union may be, yet, when sought at the expense of truth, the sacrifice is too great, and cannot be made. We would direct your attention to only one other passage. Phil. iii. 15, 16. “If in any thing ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you. Nevertheless, whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing.” In these verses there is noticeable,

1st. The subject matter which the injunction respects—grace in the heart, but also and especially the doctrines of the Word. This is plain from the mention that is made of a something about which there might be a difference of opinion—persons might be “otherwise” or differently “minded,” and, therefore, evidently principally designs the *truths* of the Word.

2d. An admission that there are truths, about which members of the church are “otherwise,” or *differently* “minded,” or, which is the same thing, that the church is not yet perfect in her attainments.

3d. An admission that in relation to *such* truth forbearance is to be exercised. This admission, however, we are not to understand as an admission that the church *may* stand still; she is to press toward perfection; this very passage assures her that God will still be giving her further and further attainments of unanimity about truths respecting which her members had been “otherwise minded;” it is her duty, then, to believe and earnestly to seek that the Lord will, in due time, bring her to these attainments, and if any will obstinately and perseveringly stand still, the church must leave them and go forward.

4th. An implied declaration that the church has already made the attainment of unanimity to *some* extent. “Whereto we have already attained.”

5th. A declaration that the truths thus “attained” are to be *maintained*, and forbearance is *not* to be exercised respecting them. “Let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing.” To set this last in a clear light, if possible, we would refer you to Rev. iii. 11. “Hold *that* fast which thou *hast*.” Rev. ii. 25. “*That* which ye *have already*, hold fast till I come.”

Here our arguments might close, were it not that we are met with the impious distinction of truths into important and unimportant, or essential and non-essential, and the plea that the church’s attainments only in important or essential truths are to be maintained, and, for the sake of peace and union, forbearance ought to be exercised in relation to those unimportant or non-essential. “But we have not so learned Christ.” It is not the relative importance of a particular truth, or set of truths, or the special connexion which they may have with our salvation, that constitutes them truths to be maintained by the church. If they be only matters of divine revelation, which the least truth and every truth is, then, whether their connexion with our salvation be near or more remote, they ought to be made matter of the church’s profession, and maintained by her when once attained. This we think plain, for the following reasons:

1. *Every truth bears the stamp of God’s authority.* Matt. xxviii. 19, 20. “Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, teaching them to observe *all things whatsoever I have commanded you.*” Deut. xii. 32. “What things soever I command you, observe to do it: thou shalt not add thereto, nor diminish from it.” But, according to the principle we are now opposing, the church is bound to observe, not the *all things God has commanded*, but only the all things essential to salvation. According to this principle, man’s chief and highest end is his own salvation, and if it was not for the essential connexion of some of these truths with his salvation, *none* of them would be worthy of being maintained—no

matter what becomes of the glory of God, the honour and authority of the laws of Christ, and the purity of the church. In opposition to this principle we are to regard, not man's salvation, but the authority of God as the primary reason for receiving and maintaining *any* truth revealed in his word; and since this is stamped upon *every* truth, and is despised in rejecting the least as well as the most important truth, the church may not, must not, nay, cannot neglect maintaining any one of them, when attained, without incurring the judgments of God. Shall an earthly sovereign be offended when his authority is in the least slighted—when the propriety, the reasonableness, the profitableness of his commands must be inquired into before they will be obeyed; and shall not He who is "King of kings and Lord of lords," be offended, when his authority is regarded by his creature-man, only when and so far as it is conceived by him to be conducive to his own interest? The end of Nadab and Abihu, who presumed to offer strange fire upon God's altar, teaches us what a holy jealousy God has for his own authority, and that his injunctions are not to be disregarded and despised with impunity. But it is the duty of the church, and highly becoming her, to be found not only not slighting the authority of God, but entertaining a fervent zeal for the honour of his authority. What can be more reasonable, or more becoming the professed followers, worshippers, servants of God, the bride, the spouse of Christ, than to be exceedingly jealous for the Lord God of hosts: but how can it be said of her that she is thus jealous for the Lord, unless she maintains the whole truth, seeing the authority of God is stamped upon it, and is honoured or despised just as the whole truth is, or is not maintained? But does not this seem to be idle reasoning? Does it not seem to be foolish trifling, to attempt proving that God *ought to be obeyed*? that his authority *ought* to be regarded *in all* things? It is ground of humiliation and lamentation that such is necessary; for it is denied to be the church's duty to maintain the whole truth, though it has for its authority a *thus saith the Lord*. Horrible sentiment! and can be accounted for only upon the ground of the woful depravity of human nature. Let us see to what this principle would lead us. We are told that "Paul shaved his head in Cenchrea," Acts xviii. 18, and the number of *knives* brought up from Babylon to Jerusalem by Sheshbazzar, upon the return from captivity, was just *twenty-nine*. Ezra i. 9, 11. If there be any unimportant truths, one would suppose these two to be of that class. Does it not, then, necessarily follow, from this principle, that forbearance should be exercised towards the person who would not admit, or might deny these truths or facts? Nay more, that the church, for the sake of peace and union, ought to chime in with this person in his non-admission or positive denial of these truths, or at least cease to assert them? Should it be objected that this consequence does not follow, for these are *evident or plainly revealed truths or facts*, and exercising forbearance in such a case would be direct toleration of direct partial infidelity; it is replied, that the principle which distinguishes truths into essentials and non-essentials, and pleads for the exercise of forbearance in regard to the non-essentials, admits that these non-essential truths *may* be "evident or plainly revealed truths," and contends not only that forbearance should be exercised towards those who will not admit them, but that it is the duty of those who know them to be "evi-

dent or plainly revealed truths," for the sake of union, to drop their profession of them. Would not this, just as evidently, be toleration of partial infidelity? Nay, would it not be the very adoption of partial infidelity? We cannot close this reason without an *extract* strikingly proving the utter unwarrantableness and error of this distinguishing of truths. "Though it may be admitted that some doctrines of the gospel are relatively of greater importance than others, yet they are individually essential parts of a perfect system. If some doctrines may be regarded as the foundation of the Christian system, while others constitute the different parts of the superstructure, it should be recollected that the superstructure is no less essential to the completeness of the building than is the foundation."

2. *The truth is unspeakably valuable.* Divine truth is the immediate ground of our hope for eternity, and a means of our sanctification and consolation. "Search the Scriptures, for in them ye think ye have eternal life, and they are they which testify of me." "Sanctify them through thy truth; thy word is truth." "This word of thine my comfort is in mine affliction." On all these accounts the truth—every truth is unspeakably valuable. But the principle we are now opposing represents that such truths only as are deemed essentials are worthy being maintained, and that all others are of minor or little importance and needed not. And is it indeed true that God ever revealed to his church a truth of so little importance, or so unprofitable, that it is unworthy being maintained by her? The psalmist was far from thinking so. Psal. xix. 10. "More to be desired are they (the judgments of the Lord) than gold, yea, than *much fine gold*;" exix. 72. "The law of thy mouth is better unto me than thousands of gold and silver." Beside, let us beware of impeaching the wisdom of God; let us not so presumptuously contradict the express declaration of Him in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge—"All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is *profitable* for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." 2 Tim. iii. 16, 17. It is true, indeed, that maintaining the *whole* truth is not *absolutely* essential to salvation, so that he who may not maintain *some* of them cannot be saved: but we may not, therefore, reject any one truth as unprofitable, for it is equally true that the rejection of any truth, just as any other sin, endangers salvation. We would not be understood as denying the perseverance of the saints; we use the same form of expression which Paul used when speaking on the same subject. 1 Cor. iii. 12, 15. "Now if any man build upon this foundation, gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble; if any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss; but he himself shall be saved, yet so as by fire." Does not the apostle, when he states that the person who receives and holds the foundation, and builds thereon, wood, hay, stubble, shall be saved, *yet so as by fire*, have allusion to the extreme danger of the person who escapes out of his house when in flames around him?

3. *The relinquishment of any truth by the church exposes her to great danger of further defection, and even final apostacy.* A temptation may be presented to the believer long, and in very different forms, before he may comply with it; but when this first temptation has been complied with, though it may have been with

reluctance and fear, every person must know how easy it is to comply with a second, how much easier to comply with a third, and how much easier still to comply with a fourth, a fifth, &c., until he is, for a time, led captive by Satan at his pleasure. So it is with the church. Though it may be with reluctance and fear that she relinquishes a single truth attained in her profession, yet with how much less reluctance and fear will she relinquish a second, how much easier will it be for her to relinquish a third, and how much easier still to relinquish a fourth, a fifth, &c., until, ere she is aware, she is wandering and lost in the mazes of error and delusion. The relinquishing, by a particular church, of one truth, and another, and another attained, soon acquires the force of habit; and, besides, God may leave her to relinquish a second truth, a third, a fourth, to hasten, to go headlong into apostasy as a judgment for her first relinquishment of a single truth. "For this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie; that they all might be damned who believe not the truth." And here facts come in to the aid of our argument. Time was when Christ had but a *few* things against the primitive churches, they had let go but a few of his truths; but what was the consequence of this *beginning* in a backward course? where are those churches now? With the relinquishment of a "few" truths they did not stop, but went on and on in their backward course; and now arewhelmed in thickest moral darkness. The moral darkness which broods over those countries first visited with the light of the Reformation is the fruit of the same course of letting go by *little and little* until the whole of that glorious light was put out.

4. *It is necessary to the church's discharging the important duty of transmitting the truth to posterity.* "He hath established a testimony in Jacob and appointed a law in Israel, which he commanded our fathers that they should make them known to their children, that the generations to come might know them, even the children who should be born, who should arise and declare them to their children;" and the important reason given for this duty is, "that they might set their hope in God and not forget the works of God, but keep his commandments." Psalm lxxviii. 5, 6, 7. It is surely no trivial argument in favour of the church's maintaining her attainments in the truth, that with it is closely connected the eternal welfare of millions yet unborn. It is indeed true that "where there is no vision," or where ignorance, error and delusion reign, "the people perish;" and as the least defection from attainments in the truth is so remarkably calculated to induce further defection and even utter apostasy; it is no difficult matter to see how awfully the relinquishment of *any* truth attained, endangers the eternal welfare of future generations, and even those not far distant. As, then, the church would esteem the redemption of the soul as precious, and as she would be innocent of the blood of unborn myriads, she lies under the most imperious obligation to maintain her attainments in the truth, that she may transmit it, pure and entire, to them as the means of their everlasting salvation.

5. *Our own comfort is a reason why we should maintain our attainments in the truth.* This is a reason which applies not so particularly to the church in her collective capacity as to her individual members. What comfort did Moses lose by not believing

the Lord, "to sanctify him in the eyes of the children of Israel?" For this he was not permitted to enter the promised land. Because Eli failed in the due exercise of parental and official authority, such evil came upon him, even in his old age, as made the ears of those who heard it to tingle. A professor's neglecting to maintain the truth is also a sin, and though it cannot bring him, if a believer, into condemnation, it may make him go halting to the grave, go continually under the hidings of God's countenance. The maintenance of truth must, therefore, be, on the contrary, a gracious source of comfort in life, and especially in death. How comforting to the Christian, at this trying hour, to reflect that he has not denied Christ's name—has not dishonoured him in this respect before the world—has been faithfully contending for his authority, and the honour and authority of his laws. Notice with what composedness of mind Paul speaks of his death, when just before him: 2 Tim. iv. 6. "I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand." Whence this peace—this composedness in the immediate prospect of death? He adds, verses 7, 8, "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, *I have kept the faith*. Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day."

6. Finally, we deem it our duty to add, that we are bound to maintain all our attainments in the truth, *by the solemn covenant engagements under which we are laid to do so*. Though the churches, generally, have abandoned the principle of the morality of public religious covenanting, and, almost universally, the practice of it, yet the obligation of the covenant engagements of the church, in former times, to be faithful to the cause and testimony of Jesus, now descends upon them, and, whether willing or unwilling, they are bound by them. But still the obligations under which *we*, as a church, are laid by this means, to be faithful to that cause and testimony, are peculiar, because of our open avowal of the descending obligation of the covenants of ancestors, and of the morality and present seasonableness of the duty; and because many of us, in our own persons, have, with our hands lifted up to the Most High God, *promised and sworn* "by the great and holy name of the Lord our God," "that during all the days of our life we shall *continue steadfast in the faith, profession, and obedience of the true reformed religion, in doctrine, worship, presbyterial church government, and discipline, as the same is held forth to us in the word of God, and received in this church, and testified for by it*." We, then, as a church, are bound by solemn covenant engagements to maintain all our attainments in the truth, and, among these, those very truths which distinguish our profession. It is not assumed that these covenant engagements bind us to maintain truths we were not previously bound by the Word of God to maintain; but having, as we humbly conceive, proved that, by the Word of God, we *were* bound to maintain *all* the truths attained in our profession, and even those which distinguish it, we do assume that our covenant engagements bind upon us, by an additional cord, the duty of maintaining these truths: and surely *he* who is disposed to remember the day he stood before the Lord,—*he* who knows the nature of an oath, and fears it,—*he* who knows that God will plead the quarrel of his covenant, will not say of this cord that it is weak, or make light of this reason.

The position we are endeavouring to establish, it will be recollected, is this, namely, *That the Associate church is in a state of warrantable separation from all other churches.* It will also be recollected it was shown there are *points of difference between the principles of the Associate church and those of other churches,* and that we took it for granted that the *distinguishing* principles of our profession are *true—the principles of the Bible,* which, it was conceived, we might fairly and safely do in an address to persons who have professed these distinguishing principles as *their* principles. That we are bound, as a church, to maintain *all* the truths we have attained in our public profession, and, amongst these, those truths which are *distinguishing,* we think we have proved: and, surely, if the authority of God, which is stamped upon every truth, is to be regarded in *all* things; if the *whole* truth is unspeakably valuable—more and better far to us than thousands of gold and silver; if the relinquishment of a single truth attained, so fearfully tends to further defection, and even apostacy; if it is a duty to transmit the truth, pure and entire, to the generations yet unborn, as the means of their everlasting salvation; if comfort in life, and especially in the trying hour of death, is at all worth having; if we should fear the oath of God; if any, or all these things be true, it must be admitted that it is *proved* that it is our duty to maintain *all* our attainments, as a church, in the truth, even those which are distinguishing. We think, then, the conclusion is irresistible, that *our separate organization and the continuance of it is warrantable;* for, while other churches deny, or will not embrace these principles which distinguish us from them, there remains no way of our maintaining these attainments, but by separation, continued separation from them.

(To be continued.)

ART. V.—*United Secession Church of Scotland.*

MR. EDITOR.—SIR:—In the Religious Monitor for January, in noticing an article on “Psalmody,” extracted from the United Secession Magazine of Scotland, you say that the United Secession “is verging rapidly to the wildest kind of latitudinarianism.”

When in my native land, I belonged to the communion of that body, and it now numbers among its members my nearest and dearest earthly friends; for this and other reasons, I feel a deep interest in its purity or declension, its prosperity or adversity.

I will, therefore, thank you to give, in your next number, your reasons for making so serious a charge, both for information to myself and that I may warn those whom I love in the flesh and the spirit, that they be not swept along in the same current of error.

I wish you to understand distinctly that I do not endorse the sentiments of the article referred to, or coincide with the unscriptural and untenable arguments of its writer. Yours, &c., N. R.

Reply to N. R.

N. R. misquotes us by substituting the word “is” for the phrase “appears to be,” thus imparting to our language a force which it will not bear. Having omitted a qualifying phrase, he is the more easily able to construe our words into a “serious charge.” Again, why is “verging” substituted for “diverging?” These words are not synonymous. And if they were, it is better to let every man speak

for himself, when this can be done. We did not say, nor do we now say, that the *United Secession* is *actually* involved in the wildest kind of latitudinarianism; but we do say, after a deliberate examination of such of her publications as we have been able to obtain, of her ecclesiastical polity, and of the reports of intelligent persons recently from that country, that she *appears* to us to be diverging rapidly towards that point. Happy will it be for the Protestant cause, if these things should, in the end, prove to be only *appearances*. Gladly would we receive substantial evidence, sufficient to demonstrate that our fears are groundless; not only for the sake of that church, but, also, on account of the influence she must necessarily exert, for good or for evil, upon the cause of sound principles in America. Is N. R. unable to discover any cause of alarm in the promulgation of "unscriptural and untenable" arguments by the standard work of that body? Is he altogether consistent? He assumes that I have made a serious charge, desires my reasons, and yet wishes to be distinctly understood not to "endorse the sentiments of the article" on which my remark was chiefly founded. He assumes too much in the first instance, and requires too much in the second; unless it is to be supposed that unscriptural tenets furnish no cause for alarm. It is probable, however, that N. R. has not duly reflected upon the importance of this matter, and that his note is rather the result of sudden impulse than of deliberation.

We shall, therefore, give our reasons, not to support a "serious charge," for we have made none, but for the language we did use.

REASON I. The article in question, entitled "Church Psalmody." The following sentiments are either directly expressed or clearly implied in that article: 1. The Book of Psalms belongs to a dispensation which has passed away. 2. It is as incongruous to confine the church to a definite book of praise as to a set form of prayer. 3. A scripture psalmody is one of the *accidental* forms of religion. 4. A scripture psalmody was not used in early times. 5. The Relief, Independent, and other churches who have adopted human compositions, to the exclusion of the inspired songs of Zion, are not chargeable with innovation. 6. Every reason that can be urged for the use of the Psalms of David in praise will apply with nearly equal force to other books of Scripture. 7. That the Psalms were *chosen* by the Old Testament church, consequently they could not have been imposed by Divine authority. 8. That the Old and New Testament dispensations are so different, that the same book of praise is unsuitable to both. 9. That the contentings of the fathers of the Secession were mere "dissensions." 10. The Psalms, through misconception, lead to feelings not well pleasing to God. (Why then permit the people to read them? Wherein does this sentiment differ from the church of Rome?) 11. Does not advocate the entire discontinuance of the Book of Psalms in worship, bad as they are. 12. Great excellence in *not a few* of the Psalms. 13. But this excellency leads parents to impress them on the minds of their children. 14. And, being once familiar to the mind, they cease to excite any appropriate feelings. 15. This cannot be the case when we worship with other denominations who use human compositions. Thus we have, within the compass of three pages, this long catalogue of heresies and absurdities. It has not a parallel in any thing with which we are acquainted, except the famous and often refuted preface of Dr. Watts. And if N. R. will point us to the same number

of absurdities in the same space, in any other respectable religious periodical, either in Britain or America, we will certainly acknowledge the obligation. Is there, then, no cause for alarm?

But, says an objector, is it candid, is it fair to hold a large body of Christians responsible for the sentiments of a single anonymous and irresponsible scribbler? Certainly not; unless the whole body make itself responsible either by connivance or approbation. How stands the case in the present instance? The article in question appeared eighteen months since, without note or comment; during all this period not one among the numerous readers and learned correspondents of the Magazine have taken the alarm. Neither has the editor, or the writer been called to account by the judicatories of the church, so far as known to us. What then is the irresistible inference? Either the whole body winks or approves. And even N. R.'s note, *prima facie*, is evidence of dissatisfaction with us for refusing, in like manner, to connive or approve.

REASON II. That church has not only laid aside a testimony for present truth and against opposing errors, but is now engaged in casting aspersions upon the fair fame of those who, in a former age, regarded these duties as obligatory upon the Christian church. See the act adopting their present testimony, in which they expressly refuse to make that testimony a term of ministerial and Christian communion. The contendings of the fathers of the Secession against the errors of their own time are also characterized as "unseemly strife," by which "the charities of life were violated," "the sanctuary profaned," "family devotion marred," and "the exercise of pious feelings interrupted." They were men "living and acting under the most pernicious influences." "It is against these influences I throw out these animadversions, and not against the men, and shall, therefore,

'No farther seek their merits to disclose,
Or draw their frailties from their dread abode.'

These pernicious influences are diminished and diminishing. The *growing* tolerance and charity of the Secession church strikes every observer of past and present times, and reference is seldom made to the denomination, without a compliment to this effect being paid to it." *United Secession Mag.*, Sept., 1840, p. 514. The article from which the foregoing extract is taken, is entitled, "The proposed Union between the United Secession and Relief Churches. Letter Sixth."

It is not to be supposed that the fathers of the Secession church were more destitute of "frailties" than others, but that they were more distinguished in this respect than their modern defamers, we are unable to believe. But the writer expressly disavows the application of these "frailties" to them as men, but to the "pernicious influences under which they lived and acted." With what consistency this distinction is made we are unable to perceive. For, if these influences, whatever they may have been, affected not the men, then why mention them in connexion? If they did affect them injuriously, this, of itself, is to be taken as one evidence of their frailty. But the context and the subject under discussion show us, at a glance, what is intended by these "pernicious influences," namely, the spirit of that day, which was roused by those men, in defence of fixed principles of religion and resistance to all opposing errors; and these

"influences" were developed, cherished, diffused, chiefly through their instrumentality; consequently it is perfectly idle to attempt, at this late day, a separation between those men and the influences under which they "lived and acted;" if the latter were evil, the former could not have been good. The distinction, then, is a mere *ruse*, to blind the minds of those whose attachment to the fathers of the Secession cannot be shaken.

REASON III. The compliments paid to the United Secession for this *growing* toleration, by Independents, Baptists, &c., is an evidence of her approximation towards them, and, consequently, of her latitudinarian spirit. It will scarcely be contended that those bodies are now more friendly to the principles held by Erskine, Fisher, Moncrief, Wilson, Gib, and others of a similar stamp, in the present, than they were in the past century. If any should think so, they are certainly mistaken. It is the toleration of men in her communion who oppose the *exclusive* spirit of early Seceders, who connive at, or adopt* human compositions in the praises of God, and who maintain, practically, the principle that we may hold communion with those from whom we differ, provided they do not restrict our liberty; or, in other words, the church may receive into her bosom such as deny some of her avowed principles, if they will allow her still to *profess* them, and thus present to the world the spectacle of a house divided against itself. And yet they say, by this arrangement, the church loses nothing. She surrenders nothing. She does not, indeed, judicially repeal any of her principles; but she permits them to become a dead letter, opens the door for the instruction of her people in error; and paves the way for such a breach as lately took place in the General Assembly, or a total subversion of her constitution. That such is the true state of the case, we have evidence, if evidence were needed, in the same number of the Magazine from which we have already quoted, p. 525. "The Methodist Conference has met, for the first time, in New Castle. With many of its modes of procedure I am *highly delighted*, and I should like very much were the Secession Synod to adopt several of the Conference measures." "In conducting a Presbytery we might be instructed by the practices of the English Independents." "Hoping you will find room in your miscellany for these *two hints*. I remain yours." The things with which the writer was highly delighted, were, indeed, things of expediency; but why so delighted with measures of expediency adopted by Methodists and Independents? Do their principles lead to more expedient measures than those held by the Reformers? But who can question the sincerity of the compliment paid to their growing toleration, by those whose measures have so greatly delighted the United Secession? Methodists and Independents will, hereafter, probably regard them in somewhat the same light that the Roman Catholics do the Oxford Tract writers. They compliment them for the rapid strides they are making back into the bosom of the mother church, while they think they have a few remaining prejudices.

It is no secret to American Seceders that a relaxation of their peculiar principles and expressions of delight, on account of the sayings and doings of Methodists and Independents, would call forth like

* We have been informed that some ministers in that church make a free use of human compositions; but cannot vouch for the accuracy of this information. If wrong, we should like to be corrected.

complimentary notices to *their* growing toleration. The operation of cause and effect is presumed to be the same on both sides of the Atlantic. And we know, at least, several Seceder ministers on this side, and the same remark is believed to be applicable to most of them, who prefer living and acting under the influences, call them pernicious or otherwise, which so distinctly marked the fathers of the Secession to all the compliments and all the possessions the world has power to bestow. Nay more, they will suffer all the evil the world has power to inflict, sooner than surrender those "influences."

They have learned from the lively oracles of God, that their inflexible adherence to truth, and determined resistance to error, were nothing more than the Head of the church has required from his people; and experience has taught them the value of these principles in the day of adversity. If, then, you have any regard for their most cherished inheritance, any sympathy for their spiritual joys, pardon their fears and their jealousies.

REASON IV. The United Secession no longer maintains the binding obligation of the covenants of our ancestors, but has laid aside the duty altogether; or, for aught we know to the contrary, has buried it among other "pernicious influences," which so strongly marked the period of the Reformation, and several subsequent periods. On this point we shall not dwell, for it is presumed it will not be denied.

REASON V. The United Secession has erected no barrier against the lax administration of the seals of the covenant, especially the Lord's Supper. Communion should be the effect of agreement in views of divine truth, and mutual affection for each other. But the fundamental principle on which that church now proceeds is, first, communion, as the means of union. How is it possible that the mere outward participation in any divine ordinance, can bring persons holding contradictory sentiments to agreement? and without agreement, how can there be love? The plea urged, is, that "they must treat each other's peculiarities with tenderness, and manifest respect for the opinions and practices they cannot adopt."* This principle was introduced in the formation of the Union, and is now insisted upon in their proposed union with the Relief. But how far is this principle to be extended? Beyond things of indifference or expediency? Every sound theologian must answer in the negative. Then it is wholly inapplicable to the purpose for which it is used. None will surely contend that the matters of difference between the various denominations are nothing more than matters of indifference or expediency. We have seen that their differences draw much deeper. They affect not only the beams of our chambers, but, in some instances, remove the chief corner stone. Is it nothing to remove the inspired songs of Zion from the Lord's house? and this is likely to prove the first great public step of the United Secession church.

In conclusion, some may think we have devoted too much room to this subject; but it will be seen that we were called upon to give our reasons, and what we have written has been with reluctance in answer to that call. We had much rather see this important matter discussed by other and more able hands. If we have sounded a false alarm, it was certainly not intended; if true, it is worthy the serious

* Dr. Jamieson, East Linton.

attention of the church, lest the same leaven that has crept into the Union, and which is at work among us,* should leaven the whole lump, and we should find ourselves suddenly and unexpectedly despoiled of the fair inheritance of our fathers. It seems to us that on the subject of psalmody, the Secession church in the United States can never yield her present position; and this position can only be maintained by jealous care and unceasing vigilance.

Some will be ready to ask, is there to be no exercise of Christian forbearance; no tenderness towards the peculiarities of others; no respect for opinions and practices which we cannot adopt? The reply is, that Christian forbearance must be applied to its legitimate objects. Personal interests, personal feelings, things indifferent, and questions of expediency, must all be sacrificed on the altar of our common Christianity. When this sacrifice has been made, it will not be difficult to learn the path of duty. But the *malady* of this age appears to consist, in some measure, in an inverted order of things. Those things which ought to be laid aside, are made causes of division, schism, strife, and every evil work. Pride, love of pre-eminence, private ends, party spirit, drink up the spirits and exhaust the energies of the church. To obtain an advantage against a brother, merely to become, in turn, the victim of a like advantage, seems to be the element in which many live and act. So, on the other hand, those things which have been instituted by the Head of the church, to be diligently observed to the end of the world, readily yield to the plea of toleration and charity. Men have become nig-gard in their own things, but lavish in the things of God, Mal. i. 8, iii. 8. When God brings back again the captivity of Zion, the reverse of all this will then be seen, acknowledged, acted upon. But now, if it be well with our own dear selves, there is little sympathy with the suffering members of Christ's body. If our coffers be full, we say to the hungry, be ye fed; to the naked, be ye clothed; and to the cold, be ye warmed. If men make a fair show in the flesh, they hold the uppermost seats in the synagogue. The persons of men are held in admiration because of advantage, and the value of a man is estimated by the amount of his possessions. And the value of God's people, in the eyes of many in the church, is in proportion to

* Several years since application was made, we believe, by the late James M'Dougal, of Argyle, to the American Bible Society for Bibles containing the Psalms in Metre. This application being unsuccessful, Mr. M'Dougal then requested the privilege of purchasing the Bible from them in sheets, that we might publish the Psalms, and bind them with those sheets, for the use of our own people, and for general distribution by our church. This request shared the same fate as its predecessor. There appeared such a manifest incongruity in paying money to an institution which so pertinaciously refused to permit a Metrical version of the Psalms to be circulated with the Bible in any case, while we could not conscientiously lay aside those Psalms, that the Synod formed themselves into a Bible Society, and adopted rules for procuring and distributing the Bible with the Psalms. But this plan of Synod has received little or no countenance in several sections of the church, and appears to be opposed in others. Why this opposition? Is it a secret dislike to a Scriptural psalmody? If singing the praises of God, in the words of inspiration, be a means of grace, and as much a divine ordinance as reading the word, or hearing it preached, then the obligation to circulate the Psalms in a form in which they can be sung, is as much a duty as the circulation of other portions of the inspired volume. A friend writes thus—"I am in ——— congregation, and last Sabbath several resolutions of Presbytery were read in favour of contributing to the American or some other Bible Society. I have just finished writing a memorial to be presented to this session, and another for the Presbytery, declining to contribute to the A. B. Society, with a prayer to each of those bodies to carry into full effect the Synod's rule on the subject of Bibles." Is not the leaven, then, at work among us? Let others judge.

the influence they may be supposed capable of exerting in the community, or the weight they may give to the church in the estimation of the world. Thus the church is depressed and afflicted by those things after which the Gentiles seek.

Carnality is, doubtless, at the bottom of this evil; but it is perpetuated and greatly aggravated by the application of this false standard to the people of God. They are not measured by the measuring reed of the word. So the laying aside any divine institution may be traced to the same carnality: namely, a mistaken estimate of its value. What will be its influence on the community, appears to be the all-absorbing question. It seems, then, that the ordinances of God are subjected to the same treatment, in the world, as his people, and for the same cause; that we are required to manifest respect, not civil respect, which all men owe to each other, but *religious* respect for principles and practices which we cannot approve, because of advantage. In like manner, also, we must tolerate innovations upon divine institutions which we cannot adopt; and, for the same reason, —advantage.

But the example of those who refused in their day to tolerate anything for which they could not find a warrant in the Scriptures, is rather to be imitated. Such persons cannot yield those divine ordinances, to which they have been indebted for enjoyment of the present time and hope of the future, of which the inspired songs of Zion are not the least part. "The word of the Lord is right, and all his works are done in truth." "His *praise* shall be continually in my mouth." "Because thy loving-kindness is better than life, my lips shall *praise* thee." "*Praise* is comely for the upright." "*Praise* waiteth for thee, O God, in Zion." "Enter his courts with *praise*." "Declare his *praise* in Jerusalem." "Who can show forth all his *praise*?" "Before the gods will I sing *praise* to thee." "*Praise* is comely." Is any in distress? "Wait on the Lord; be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart: wait, I say, on the Lord." Is any afraid of the enemy? "Thou hast lifted me up, and hast not made my foes to rejoice over me." Is any weary of the cares and trials of life? "Thy statutes have been my songs in the house of my pilgrimage." In this book there is balm for the wounded soul, and cordials for those that are ready to faint. Call us, then, what you will, treat us as you will, this Book we cannot surrender.

ART. VI.—*The Roman Catholic Claim.*

Report of the Special Committee to which was referred the Petition of the Roman Catholics to the Common Council, relative to the School Fund.

Since the memorable defeat of the Roman Catholics on the 11th of Jan., 1841, a desire has frequently been expressed that the Report adopted by the Board of Aldermen might be more widely circulated. To extend the great truths imbodyed in that document, and for the purpose of making one or two additional remarks, we give the report entire, and commend it, not merely to the perusal, but to the study of every American citizen. This Roman Catholic claim is destined to be a political question of absorbing interest. In their

publications, issued around us, they are constantly declaring that they shall never cease to agitate the subject, until they carry their points. It is therefore of the highest importance that the public should be put in possession of those views and facts that may be essential to a full and fair understanding of the nature and bearings of the question.

The Special Committee, to whom was referred the Petition of the Catholics, for a portion of the School Fund, together with the remonstrances against the same, presented the following report thereon, which was, on motion, accepted, and the Committee discharged, on a division called by Alderman Graham, Jun. In the affirmative, the President, Aldermen Balis, Woodhull, Benson, Jones, Rich, Chamberlain, Campbell, Hatfield, Jarvis, Smith, Nichols, Graham, Cooper, and Nash—15. In the negative, Aldermen Pentz—1. And 1000 copies thereof ordered to be printed, with the vote taken on the report.

REPORT.

In pursuance of the instructions contained in the resolution, they employed two entire days in visiting the public schools, accompanied by a Committee of the petitioners, and also of the Public School Society, with a view to ascertain if any defects exist in their organization; and after a thorough scrutiny, in which all parties participated, your Committee not only failed to discover any thing strikingly defective in the system, but became strongly impressed with a conviction that the public schools, under their present organization, are admirably adapted to afford precisely the kind of instruction for which they were instituted. It is deemed essential to the welfare and security of our government, that the means of mental cultivation should be extended to every child in the community. The rising generation are destined to be the future rulers of the land, and their happiness can only be secured by such an education as will constitute them an intelligent community, prepare them to guard against the machinations of demagogues, and so to exercise the rights and franchises of citizens, as not to deprive themselves of the invaluable privileges which are their birthright. That the public school system, as now organized, is calculated to effect these objects, your Committee do not entertain a doubt; but, though they regard it as an incalculable public blessing, if they could be persuaded that it trespassed upon the conscientious rights of any portion of our citizens, they would begin to doubt the propriety of its continuance: they cannot, however, conceive that it is justly amenable to such a charge, so long as sectarian dogmas and peculiarities are excluded from the schools, and no pupils are either admitted into them, or excluded from them, against the consent of their natural or legal guardians. The system has grown up under the auspices of a voluntary association of individuals usually known as "The Public School Society," formed for the purpose of promoting education, and admitting to membership any citizen of good moral character, who is not a clergyman, upon a contribution of ten dollars to its funds. This society has watched with indefatigable vigilance and untiring assiduity over the rise and progress of the system, and by their unrequited labours it has been nurtured into maturity. In its present aspect, it is a monument of disinterestedness and public spirit, of which our city has reason to be proud.

Your Committee hereby acknowledge their indebtedness to the

members of that society, for the prompt manner in which they responded to every call made upon them, and they cannot but hope that the spirit of candour which they have displayed, and which the petitioners in the same spirit acknowledge, will ultimately remove every barrier, which, through misapprehension, as your Committee believe, has hitherto retarded the entire success of their benevolent and patriotic exertions. It has been objected on the part of the petitioners, that the books used in the public schools, contain passages that are calculated to prejudice the minds of children against the Catholic faith. This objection, your Committee discovered to be not wholly unfounded; but we are happy to have it in our power to add, that the School Society fully agree with us in the opinion that nothing in the books or usages of the schools should be continued that is calculated, in the remotest degree, to wound the feelings or prejudice the minds of children in favour of or against any religious sect whatever; that they have expunged such passages in the books as they have been able to discover in any way objectionable; that they desire to continue, and earnestly solicit the aid and co-operation of the petitioners, in the work of expurgation, until every really objectionable feature shall be entirely obliterated. The extreme difficulty of this undertaking is illustrated by the fact that some of the very same passages quoted by the petitioners as particularly objectionable, and which have been obliterated in the public school books, were found by your Committee entirely unobscured in the books used in one of the Catholic schools. It is a melancholy fact, that in neighbourhoods where Catholic children are numerous, the public schools number but few children whose parents profess the Catholic faith; but after the arduous task of expurgation shall have been completed, and every well grounded objection removed, your Committee fondly hope that the school-houses will be filled with children, and that no parents or guardians, be their religious feelings what they may, will refuse to avail themselves of the benefits of the public schools for the education of their children, being fully persuaded that many years would elapse, before any new system of instruction could be organized, with advantages equal to the one, now equally available to every child in the community. If, with such a system, any portion of the children should be left uneducated, it cannot be justly chargeable to a want of comprehensiveness in the system, but is more fairly attributed to imperfections which human legislation cannot remedy. The general objections to sectarian public schools, do not apply to cases where children are supported by charity, and necessarily confined to a particular locality, and not open to all children. Your Committee think that all such establishments might enjoy the benefits of education, at public expense, without an infringement of the principles contended for; and the rule being made general, their participation in the benefits of the School Fund, would not necessarily constitute a public recognition of their religious sectarian character. No school system can be perfect which does not place the means of education within the reach of every child who is capable of receiving instruction; and such your Committee believe to be the design and capacity of the system now in use in this city.

The Public School buildings are constructed upon a uniform model; the books used are the same in all the schools, and the classes and departments in each, are so similarly constituted and provided,

that the removal of a pupil from one school to another will not interrupt his studies or retard his progress. Though religion constitutes no specific part of the system of instruction, yet the discipline of the schools, and the well arranged and selected essays and maxims which abound in their reading books, are well calculated to impress upon the minds of children, a distinct idea of the value of religion; the importance of the domestic and social duties; the existence of God, the Creator of all things; the immortality of the soul; man's future accountability; present dependence upon a superintending Providence; and other moral sentiments, which do not conflict with sectarian views and peculiarities.

The different classes examined in several schools by your Committee exhibited an astonishing progress in geography, astronomy, arithmetic, reading, writing, &c.; and indicated a capacity in the system for imparting instruction, far beyond our expectations; and, though the order and arrangements of each school would challenge comparison with a camp under a rigid disciplinarian, yet the accustomed buoyancy and cheerfulness of youth and childhood did not appear to be destroyed in any one of them: such were the favourable impressions forced upon our minds by a careful examination of the public schools. It is due to the Trustees, to add, that not one of our visits was anticipated, and no opportunity was afforded to any of the teachers for even a momentary preparation. In the course of our investigations, we also visited three of the schools established by the petitioners, and for the benefit of which a portion of the School Fund is solicited. We found them, as represented by the petitioners, lamentably deficient in accommodations, and supplies of books and teachers: the rooms were all excessively crowded and poorly ventilated; the books much worn as well as deficient in numbers, and the teachers not sufficiently numerous; yet, with all these disadvantages, though not able to compete successfully with the public schools, they exhibited a progress which was truly creditable; and with the same means at their disposal, they would doubtless soon be able, under suitable direction, greatly to improve their condition. The object of the petitioners is to supply these deficiencies from the fund provided by the bounty of the State for the purposes of common school education. But, however strongly our sympathies may be excited in behalf of the poor children assembled in these schools, such is the state of the public mind on this subject, that if one religious sect should obtain a portion of the School Fund, every other one would present a similar claim, and it would be a signal for the total demolition of the system, which has grown up under the guidance of many years of toilsome experience; attaining a greater degree of perfection, than has perhaps, ever before been achieved, and which is probably extending a greater amount of instruction at smaller expense than can possibly be imparted by any other school system that has been devised. This result of such a disposal of the School Funds would most probably be followed by a counteraction in the public mind, which would lead to a revocation of the Act by a succeeding Common Council, and the awakening of a spirit of intolerance, which, in our country, is, of all calamities, the one most to be dreaded. Political intolerance is an unmitigated evil; but the experience of past ages ought to admonish us to guard, with unceasing vigilance, against religious intolerance, as an evil greater in magnitude in proportion as eternal consequences exceed

those of time. So long as government refuses to recognise religious sectarian differences, no danger need be apprehended from this source; but when it begins to legislate with particular reference to any particular denomination of Christians, in any manner which recognises their religious peculiarities, it oversteps a boundary which public opinion has established, violates a principle which breathes in all our Constitutions; and opens a door to that unholy connexion of politics with religion which has so often cursed and desolated Europe. Under these impressions of the impossibility of granting the prayer of the petitioners, without producing the most fatal consequences, and impressed, at the same time, with an anxious desire to remove every obstacle out of the way of the public education of their children, if it could be done without sacrificing any fundamental principle, your Committee invited the School Society and the petitioners to appoint delegates to meet them, with a view to effect a compromise, if possible. The invitation was promptly responded to, and several meetings were held, at which the subject was fully and very courteously discussed, in all its bearings, and though we extremely regret to report, that the conferences did not result as favourably as we had hoped, yet the spirit and tenor of the following propositions, submitted, at our request, by both the School Society and the petitioners, encourage a belief that our labour may not have been entirely in vain.

[Here follow certain propositions, submitted by the Roman Catholics and by the Public School Society.]

Your Committee deem it proper to remark, in vindication of the School Society, that they were only one of the numerous remonstrants against the prayer of the petitioners. Their views were represented in the late discussion before the Board only by their legal advisers, Messrs. Sedgwick and Ketchum. The other gentleman who participated in the discussion represented other bodies which are not in any manner connected with them. Sentiments were uttered by some of them which the School Society do not entertain, and for which they are not justly accountable. This explanation is deemed proper, in consequence of a remark in the above proposition of the petitioners, which appears to be founded on an erroneous impression. The unwillingness of the petitioners to agree to any terms which did not recognise the distinctive character of their schools as Catholic schools, or which would exclude sectarian supervision from them entirely, was the obstacle to a compromise, which could not be overcome. However much we may lament the consequences, we are not disposed to question the right of our Catholic fellow citizens to keep their children separated from intercourse with other children, but we do not believe the Common Council would be justified in FACILITATING such an object; they have an unquestionable right to pursue such a course, if the dictates of conscience demand it of them, and they have a just claim to be sustained by the Common Council in the exercise of that right, but they cannot justly claim public aid to carry out such intentions, unless they can show that the public good would be promoted by it, and that such public aid can be extended to them without trespassing upon the conscientious rights of others; but if any religious society, or sect, should be allowed the exclusive right to select the books, appoint or nominate the teachers, or introduce sectarian peculiarities

of any kind into a public school, the exercise of such right, in any one particular, would very clearly constitute such a school a sectarian school, and its support at the public expense would, in the opinion of the Committee, be a trespass upon the conscientious rights of every tax-payer who disapproved of the religion inculcated by the sect to which such school might be attached, because they would be paying taxes for the support of a religion which they disapproved. Your Committee are, therefore, fully of the opinion, that the granting of the prayer of the petitioners, or conforming to the terms of the proposals submitted by the Committee who represented them, would render the school system liable to the charge of violating the rights of conscience, a charge which would be fatal to the system, because it would invalidate its just claim to public patronage.

The proposition of the Committee who represented the Public School Society appears to us to have been conceived in a liberal spirit; your Committee think it goes as far as a due regard to the true objects of the institution would warrant, and seems to open an avenue which we would fain hope may yet lead to a satisfactory arrangement. Both propositions exhibit more liberality, probably, than either party had before given the other credit for, and we hope that the result may prove to be an important step towards the accomplishment of an object which every patriot must desire with intense anxiety. Your Committee respectfully ask to be discharged from the farther consideration of the subject.

WM. CHAMBERLAIN,
ROBERT JONES,
JOSIAH RICH.

REMARKS.

The Anti-Catholic Books.

The Committee discover one remarkable fact. We had heard and had stated, that they found *one* book in the *Romish* Schools that had been subjected to a purgatorial process in the Public Schools. But here we are told that,

"Some of the very passages quoted by the petitioners [the Roman Catholics] as particularly objectionable, and which have been obliterated in the *Public School* books, were found by the Committee entirely unobscured in the *books* used in one of the Catholic Schools."

So, all the clamour they have raised against the books, and which has always been regarded as the only reasonable objection to the present system, turns out to be mere clamour, (*vox præterea nihil*), even in their own estimation. Bad as these Protestant books are, they prefer to use them in their own schools, when the whole field of *Romish literature* invites them to cull its choicest passages for the instruction of their young. Let this be remembered when this tempest is stirred again.

A Revocation of the Act.

The report asserts most truly, that even if the Common Council should grant the demand, "the result would be followed by a counter-action in the public mind, which would lead to a revocation of the act by a succeeding Common Council." There is no doubt

at all in that matter. Never was a graver truth uttered by a corporate body. We were not disposed to use such language while the case was pending, lest it should seem to be an appeal to the fears of political men. But we are glad they have put it on record; that henceforth it may be known that the men in the city, or state, or national halls of legislation, who shall vote the public money to the Roman Catholics, will be swept away from the posts they have betrayed, as chaff is driven by the storm. Let this declaration, therefore, adopted by the Board, 15 to 1, that if one Council grants this unrighteous demand, another will recall it, be written in letters of light over the walls of their Chamber, to be read whenever the subjects of a foreign potentate ask for Republicans' birthright.—*N. Y. Ob.*

ART. VII.—*Some Questions relative to the final Perseverance of the Saints.*

(By the late Rev. Thomas Scott, author of the Commentary on the Bible, &c.)

THE doctrine of Final Perseverance has been so repeatedly and amply proved to be true and important, from a vast number of express Scripture testimonies; from the Divine character and perfections; from the nature of the whole scheme of salvation; and from the security of the covenant of grace; that it would be superfluous to add any thing to the evidence that has already been adduced.

Yet, there are many persons that appear to be, and doubtless are, true Christians, who not only hesitate to embrace this truth, but have strong prejudices against it. This, I apprehend, frequently arises from the too common want of accuracy in our method of stating the doctrine; from the gross abuses of which, not only it is supposed capable, but which are actually made of it in buoying up the vain confidence, and ministering to the unhallowed joys of hypocritical professors; and from their not seeing how it can be guarded from such dishonourable perversions. To obviate, therefore, such objections against a part of Divine truth, which is so useful for the peace and establishment of the humble Christian, and to rescue it from those abuses which oppose it to the scorn of Pharisees and Infidels, should be the uniform endeavour of every one who believes it, and finds spiritual advantage from it. I would, therefore, propose, and attempt to answer, a few plain questions relative to this doctrine.

1st. WHO ARE THE PERSONS that shall finally persevere?

It is easy to answer, in general, that all believers, children of God, or saints, shall finally persevere. But this leaves the matter where it was; to remove the difficulty we must enter more particularly into the subject.

No minister of the Gospel, by preaching this doctrine, intends to convey the idea, that the whole company of persons who profess to believe this, or any other doctrine, or all other doctrines of their system, shall finally be saved; or that the privilege of final perseverance is confined to those who make it an article of their creed. The belief of this doctrine may do the pious person important services; the rejection of it may be very prejudicial to him, without either being the cause of perseverance on the one hand, or of obstinacy on the other. Those hearers of the word, in all congregations,

who receive the seed by the way-side, which, being taken away by Satan, does not strike root; those who receive it in stony ground, in an *unhumbled* heart, whose temporary faith and ostentatious profession, sooner or later, will come to nought; and those who receive it among thorns, who are so attached to, and encumbered by *worldly* things, that they bear no fruit; all these, having no grace, can persevere in nothing but open sin, or specious hypocrisy. The Word of God gives us reason to suspect that, even of those professors who stand very high in the estimation of the most experienced and judicious servants of God, some will end no better than Ahithophel, Judas, or Demas; whether they persevere in their unsound profession or apostatize from it. God alone can see the heart, and though he has given us such rules of judgment as suffice to direct us in our duty, yet he never meant to communicate his Divine prerogative of *certainly* knowing others to be true Christians. How then can we certainly know of any man, that he will infallibly so persevere as to be saved? "Let God be true, though every man be a liar." If any professor, however eminent, apostatize, and live and die an apostate, (which, by the way, it is not very easy for another man to be sure of,) let us not bring it as a matter of fact to overturn the truth of God, by saying, "a child of God has fallen away finally;" nor let us rashly suppose an *impenitent* apostate has been saved; rather let us say, a very specious hypocrite has been unmasked.

But though we cannot *certainly* know concerning others, whether they have real grace, because we have no consciousness of what passes in their hearts; yet, as conscious of what passes in our own, we may, in some cases at least, *certainly* know that we have true grace, and, therefore, shall finally persevere. While grace is very small, and the discerning faculty very dim, and sin prevails very much, the minuteness of the object, the imperfection of the organ, and the surrounding obstacles, must make it difficult to decide absolutely; but when the judgment is matured, and grace increased, and corruptions more brought under, I apprehend we may determine in a more confident manner.

This premised, the matter comes to an issue. The true Christian shall finally persevere. He who is sure of his Christian state, may thence certainly infer his perseverance.

Now true Christians perceive a vast importance in eternal things, and judge temporal things comparatively worthless.

True Christians see great hatefulness in sin, and much sin in their past lives, in their present conduct, and in their hearts, which produces deep humiliation, sorrow for sin, and unfeigned repentance, and causes them to set themselves against all sin, especially that sin which has been most customary to them; to watch against it, to pray against it, and to dread it, and to consider sin as the worst thing that can come to them.

True Christians are influenced in their daily walk by a realizing belief, that things are, have been, and will be, as the Word of God declares them.

True Christians especially believe the whole testimony of God concerning Jesus Christ, and, humbly conscious of their need of such a salvation, freeness, and sufficiency, renounce all other hopes to flee to, lay hold of, apply for, and trust in Jesus Christ, and God's grace and mercy through him.

True Christians count every personal endowment, attainment, or performance, and every worldly interest, connexion, and comfort, worthless, in comparison of Christ, and are thus prepared to part with any or all of them, when they come in competition with him, and have actually given up many things for his sake.

True Christians receive him unreservedly in all his offices, and live by faith in him, as their Prophet, Priest, and King, for the pardon of all their sins, and the supply of all their wants.

True Christians have the law of God written in their hearts; inwardly delight in it, though they cannot obey it as they would; they are then most in their element, and happiest, when they are engaged in their religious exercises and holy services. They allow of no known sin, and neglect no known duty, but "by the grace of God, which bringeth salvation, are taught to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world."

Now as far as any man is inwardly conscious that this is his experience, these his desires, this his daily aim, his character and conduct, he may be sure that he possesses what no hypocrite ever yet attained. And he may be sure that the same distinguishing grace, which has wrought this decisive difference, will persevere and perfect its own good work. But, whilst this matter remains doubtful, the other cannot be certain; for how can he be sure of perseverance who is not sure of conversion? Such should be exhorted to "give diligence, to make their calling and election sure;" and be encouraged by the promise, that "they who seek shall find." But let them not prematurely grasp at what neither belongs to them, nor would yet be profitable to them. Nay, if the established Christian grows very slothful, or sinks into allowed sin; by thus weakening his evidence of conversion he loses the *warranted* comfort of this doctrine; which, in this case, would operate as a most dangerous opiate when stimulants alone are requisite. It is the wise appointment of God, that when love declines, fear should rouse the torpid soul; and none should counteract this appointment. Is the backslider alarmed and distressed? It is well. Let him "repent and do his first works," and in due time God will restore his former consolations; but let none encourage themselves in sloth and sin by this doctrine, lest, being deceived, they perish with a "lie in their right hand."

The true believer, then, in the habitual exercise of grace, and practice of his duty, is the only person who can *warrantably* be confident of perseverance. Having so fully resolved the first question, the others will more readily be despatched.

2nd. WHAT NEED HAS THE PERSON ABOVE DESCRIBED OF THIS ENCOURAGEMENT, seeing he may be supposed to be otherwise comforted?

The more a man values spiritual blessings, the greater will be his dread of losing them. The more conscientious, circumspect, and watchful he is, the greater will be his acquaintance with the treachery of his own heart, the fascinations of the world, and the artifice of Satan. The falls of others, whom he has preferred far before himself, will much alarm and distress him. He will not always, even when most diligent, walk in light and comfort; and he will be conscious of much sloth and evil, though he cause no scandal

to the Gospel, nor much bring the reality of his conversion into doubt. On all these accounts, he will be anxious about the future, and distressed about the event of the important warfare; even to the discouraging of his heart, and the weakening of his hands at some time. But this doctrine is sweetly suited to encourage him to commit the keeping of his soul, for the remnant of his days, into the hands of a faithful, covenant God, that without distraction he may attend to his present duty. For the Lord takes pleasure in seeing his servants joyful in their work, though not in sin and sloth. But,

3rd. IN WHAT shall they persevere?

1st. In that state of grace wherein they stand, so as not finally to perish, or come short of glory; for their good shepherd shall keep, and "none shall pluck them out of his hand," by temptation or persecution, living or dying. 2d. In an habitual course of holy obedience, progressively "waxing stronger and stronger," and bringing forth fruit more and more even to the end. The former mainly respects their personal interests; the latter is intimately connected with the glory of God, and the credit of the Gospel in the world, together with the interests of religion and the salvation of souls; the former is important—the latter infinitely more so. Self-love alone may influence a man to desire to be saved from misery, and made eternally happy; but nothing short of Divine grace, producing genuine love of God, attachment to the cause of godliness, and benevolence to the souls of men, can render us anxious about the latter. To suppose a man awakened and converted, and then returning into the world and sin, and after a long interval, perhaps of many years, just brought back again to escape hell; and to suppose this a general and common case, and to accommodate the doctrine to it, is to make a perseverance pleasing to hypocrites, dishonourable to God, scandalous to religion, subversive of holy practice, and unsuitable to true Christians, who all long to persevere to the end in *increasing holiness*, and dread sin as the greatest evil, and cannot bear the thoughts of dishonouring God and being hurtful examples to others, even though they should not be sent to hell for it. A few anomalous cases we may allow of; but the general rule is, a perseverance to holiness, even to the end.

4th. Finally, HOW SHALL THIS PERSEVERANCE BE EFFECTED?

The Lord himself will either, by his continual grace, uphold his people in the uniform holy walk which he requires, daily exercising "repentance towards God, faith in our Lord Jesus Christ," and cheerful universal obedience; or, if at any time they are left to step aside, he will withhold comfort from their souls, rebuke them by his word, chastise them with his rod, till he brings them to repentance, and leads them, "with weeping and supplication," back into the forsaken paths of holy obedience. Did it consist with the purpose and counsel of God to leave a true Christian to depart from him, and return into the world and sin, and die impenitent, he not only might, but certainly should perish. Our security is, that God hath promised that he will "put *his fear* into the hearts" of all his true servants, that they shall not thus depart from him.

Thus stated and guarded, this doctrine may be of eminent use to the true Christian, to quicken his diligence, arm him with courage, and invigorate his resolution to press forward; to be "steadfast and immoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch

as he knows that his labour is not in vain in the Lord." And if hypocrites will abuse it, they do it at their peril.

THOMAS SCOTT.

MR. EDITOR,

As the Religious Monitor is the only proper organ of the Associate Church in this country, I would respectfully ask leave to make an explanation respecting the proceedings of Synod.

In 1838 I published a series of Miscellaneous Letters, written by a Layman. At the foot of page 78, it is said "against this decision Dr. Ramsey with ten other ministers and two elders protested." From the reading it might appear to apply to a case of appeal just decided, while it was intended to apply to the passage of what is called the new marriage act. This will appear from the minutes of Synod referred to. Perhaps it is correctly understood, as no one has informed me of an error; but, as I perceive the language is susceptible of a wrong meaning, to guard against any possible mistake, I have deemed this explanation necessary.

Now that the subject is before me, permit me to ask how stands the matter respecting this new rule? From 1833 to 1837, inclusive, this subject was before Synod, and then suffered to die. It was surely not the intention of Synod to make this new rule a stepping-stone to no rule at all, and yet such is the effect. Some persevered in opposition to Synodical authority; others yielded; and now, in some parts of the Associate Church, there is an utter disregard of all church rules on the subject of marriage.

I just mention the facts, and leave it for others to say whether things are as they should be.

JAMES MORROW.

Obituary.

DIED—At Lewistown, Pa., on the 21st of October, Mrs. MARTHA WALTER, in the 83d year of her age. It is not the object of these few remarks needlessly to eulogize the deceased. Her life was, indeed, marked by the development of the most kind, social, and benevolent feelings, and her humble and unobtrusive piety and faithfulness, amid the varied duties of life, has left a sweet memorial in the hearts of surviving friends; yet, it is chiefly on account of a Christian firmness and consistency, rarely to be met with in these degenerate times, that her memory may justly claim a public tribute of respect. It is an example, of which the influence should be widely felt. At an early period of her life she made a profession of religion, in connexion with the Associate Presbyterian church, which profession she continued to adorn throughout her lengthened years, by a consistent walk and conversation, and by a faithful adherence to those principles which she knew to be in accordance with the Divine Word. For more than thirty years before any Associate congregation was organized in Lewistown, she was alone in her profession, enjoying ordinances only occasionally by some passing minister, or by an annual attendance on sealing ordinances in the nearest congregation, thirty-three miles distant. Her patient waiting, in well-doing, was ultimately rewarded. She lived to see and enjoy, for a number of years, the fellowship of a settled congregation. Her memory will long be cherished with fond regret as a mother in Israel, and her name be mentioned with respect, by all who value

Christian integrity. Christian firmness and gentleness characterized her life, resignation and faith beautified her death. A covenant God will never forsake his own. If professors are called, in Divine Providence, to reside in places where they are deprived of ordinances, agreeable to their profession, instead of falling in with prevailing corruptions, let them remain firm, and the Great Head of Zion may yet make them the germ of a future congregation. If clearly in the way of duty in residing in such places, we have reason to believe God will send the Gospel to his own.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.—“A Father’s Advice to his Children,” though dated in November last, has only recently come to hand, and will probably be inserted in the present volume. The Answer to the question—“Should a person baptized by one who is destitute of Ministerial Authority be re-baptized?” did not reach us in season for the present number. It will appear in the next. Our correspondent E. is informed that we have not room to enter on the investigation of “Old Testament Servitude” in the present volume; but if spared and permitted, in the providence of God, to go on with another volume, as we hope, a discussion of that question will be admitted into the pages of the Monitor. “Further Remarks on Voluntary Associations” in the next number. The “Catholic Claim” is published as an article of intelligence. The contest appears to be between “Popery” and “No Religion.”

SOCIAL CORRUPTION.—“Moral disease of a deadly dangerous nature has overspread the land. Witness the chicanery of the law; the frauds and impositions in every branch of trade, and the aggravation of our commercial iniquity, as connected with the colonial system. Because of swearing, profligacy, drunkenness, and Sabbath-breaking, the land mourneth. Impurity and prostitution have awfully increased, and are still increasing. Infidelity, worldly-mindedness, antinomianism, hypocrisy, fanaticism, and a false liberality, ever ready to sacrifice the authority of revelation at the shrine of human reason, clearly indicate that the power of vital religion has obviously declined, and impiety seems coming in like a flood.—Where is that deep penitent spirit, that holy zeal for Christ, that entire separation from the world, and the dread of its spirit and maxims, lest the heart should not be right with God, which so eminently distinguished our holy men in former times?”—*Thorpe*.

SIGNS OF THE TIMES.—“The concussions of the nations—the simultaneous shaking of the Ottoman and Papal empires—the propagation of the gospel beyond the limits of the western Roman empire—the state of feeling and excitement in the Jewish nation—the infidel insensibility of the world—and the death-like slumbers of the church—the midnight cry which has recently been raised, and is now ringing in the ears of the infidel world, and the sleeping church—all indicate that the mysterious 1260 years have nearly run out their course.”—*Thorpe*.

g
y
e
e

ad
to
of
on
re-
in-
ne;
with
be
on
holic
ap-

s na-
law;
ggra-
lonial
abath-
e aw-
nded-
rality.
ine of
on has
ood.—
st, that
it and
o emi-
oe.

the si-
propa-
empire
the in-
of the
and is
church
run out

CONTENTS.

	Page		Page
Family Worship,.....	433	Some Questions relative to the final	
A Sermon of the Rev. Thomas Ham-		Perseverance of the Saints,....	475
ilton,.....	441	To the Editor,.....	479
Voluntary Associations,.....	448	Obituary,.....	479
Occasional Hearing,.....	453	To Correspondents,.....	480
United Secession Church of Scot-		Social Corruption,.....	480
land,.....	463	Signs of the Times,.....	480
The Roman Catholic Claim,.....	469		

RECEIPTS BY MAIL, FROM FEBRUARY 1st, 1841, to MARCH 6th, 1841.

Wm. Huston per Rev. W. H. Walker, for 13th, 14th vols. and half of 15th,.....	\$ 5 00	to John M'Connell, Samuel Reid, James Moore, Sen., and 16th, and 17th to himself,..	\$ 10 00
Jn. Anderson for 17 volumes, sent			

"James P. Miller, takes this means to express his grateful acknowledgments to those brethren, and friends, who have kindly acted as agents for the sale and circulation of his 'SKETCHES, &c.,' and to request them to use all diligence practicable, to be ready to close their accounts, at the next meeting of Synod. He would also take this opportunity to state, that after that time, the price on the books remaining unsold, will be increased 25 cents per copy. This has become necessary to cover the expenses of publication, increased by the discount on the money and interest."

BOOK OF DISCIPLINE.—The New Book of Discipline is now ready for distribution. Price, twelve and a half cents single copy—\$1 25, per dozen—and \$9, per hundred copies.

AGENTS.—In addition to the ministers and itinerating preachers of good standing in the Associate Church, who are requested to receive subscriptions and money, and give receipts, the following persons are authorized to act as special agents:

J. R. Weldin, 37 Market Street, Pittsburgh, Pa.
 James Henry, Albany, N. Y.
 Peter M'Arthur, Cambridge, Washington County, N. Y.
 Alex. Galley, Clark's Ferry, Perry Co. Pa.
 Wm. M'Ninn, Potter's Mills, Centre Co., Pa.
 Thomas Reveridge, D. D., Canonsburgh, Pa.
 James Gordon, Peoria, Livingston Co., N. Y.
 John Anderson, Huntingdon, Pa.

Thomas Cummings, Putnam, Washington Co., N. Y.
 James Wilson, Esq., Forks of Muddy Creek, York Co., Pa.
 Alexander W. Brewster, Erie, Pa.
 James Hutchinson, Esq., New London Cross Roads, Chester Co., Pa.
 John Smith, Pittsburgh Village, Carroll Co., Indiana.
 R. G. Shannon, P. M., Columbus, Randolph Co., Ill.
 Col. Wm. M'Vey, Cherry Forks, Adams Co., Ohio.

TERMS.—Two Dollars per annum, payable in advance or at the annual meeting of the Associate Synod.

Post Masters are respectfully requested to notify us of any discontinuance of the work sent to their office. The numbers need not be returned.

No subscription discontinued till arrears are paid, unless at the option of the proprietors.

Money may be sent by mail at the risk and expense of the proprietors when five dollars or more is enclosed, provided the money is at par value in Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, New York, or Albany.